

2dartist

Issue 102 | June 2014

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tutorials inside!

Make it as a concept artist

Geoffrey Ernault offers indispensable advice on how to break into the industry

CARICATURE PAINTING TIPS

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divulges the art of painting
the perfect female caricature

Create creature concepts

Kamil Murzyn shares tips and
tricks for painting creatures



Transform your sketches

Luky shares her top tips for
taking your sketches to the
next level

Adapt interior lighting

Discover how Nacho Yagüe alters
the lighting and mood of a midday
scene into a scene at dusk

+plus

- 10 of the best digital images
- Sketching with texture brushes
- Master atmospheric lighting effects
- Design narrative compositions
- and much more!

Editor's Letter



JESS SERJENT-TIPPING
Deputy Editor

Welcome to the June issue of *2dartist* magazine!

Many artists working in the film and videogame industries tell us about the importance of not only working quickly, but having the ability to adjust scenes and create variations at the drop of the hat. In this issue of *2dartist*, we take a look at the techniques and processes to speed up and improve these skills!

Nacho Yagüe and Darek Zabrocki share a wealth of knowledge when it comes to manipulating lighting and creating a diverse range of moods with speed!

Geoffrey Ernault proves that with practice comes speed... and a great career, as he shares an insight into how he made it as a concept artist.

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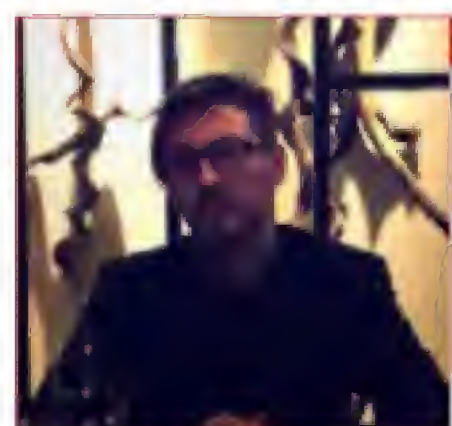
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Contributors



GEOFFREY ERNAULT

Geoffrey has been digital painting for over six years. He started freelance work about three years ago and is now working at Guerilla Games as a concept artist. He discusses his career and the THU festival.



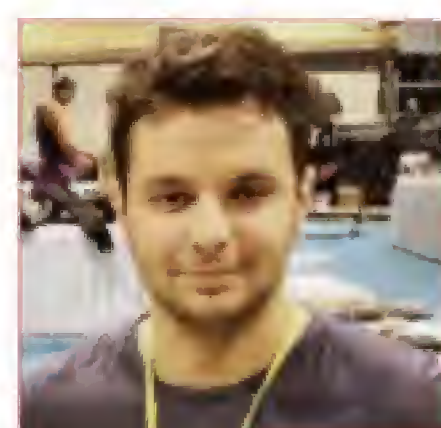
MARK HAMMERMEISTER

Mark Hammermeister is an award-winning illustrator from the Detroit area. His clients include LucasFilm and *Playboy*, and he has received awards from 3X3, *Creative Quarterly* and *ImagineFX*.



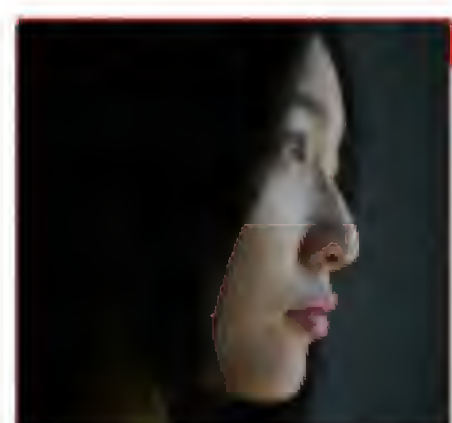
LUCY MAZEL (LUKY)

Lucy graduated in 2009 from a private art school and has worked as an illustrator and comic-book artist ever since. Notable works include being published in French magazines and books, and collaborating with art galleries.



DAREK ZABROCKI

Darek Zabrocki is a freelance concept artist and illustrator living in Gdansk, Poland. He began painting as a hobby before switching to digital art, where he now boasts 20th Century Fox and Fantasy Flight Games as clients.



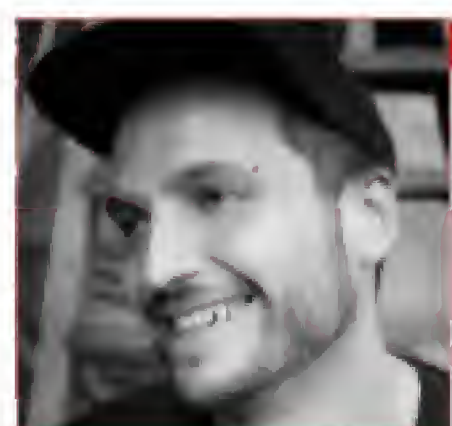
DONGLU YU

Donglu Yu is a senior concept artist working at Ubisoft Montreal. She has worked on game titles such as *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, *Assassin's Creed III*, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.



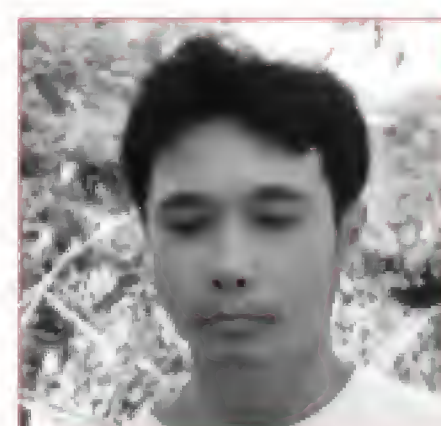
KAMIL MURZYN

Kamil Murzyn is a 3D generalist from Poland, working for mobile gaming. In his spare time, he likes to draw, paint and sculpt creature concepts and character designs.



NACHO YAGÜE

Nacho Yagüe is a concept artist in the videogame industry who has worked on projects such as *Splinter Cell: Blacklist* and the upcoming *Assassin's Creed: Unity*. He currently works at Ubisoft Toronto (Canada).



AEKKARAT SUMUTCHAYA

Aekkarat Sumutchaya is currently working as an art director as co-founder of ANIMANIA, an animation studio located in Bangkok, Thailand. He layers his imaginative ideas with stories and personal opinions.

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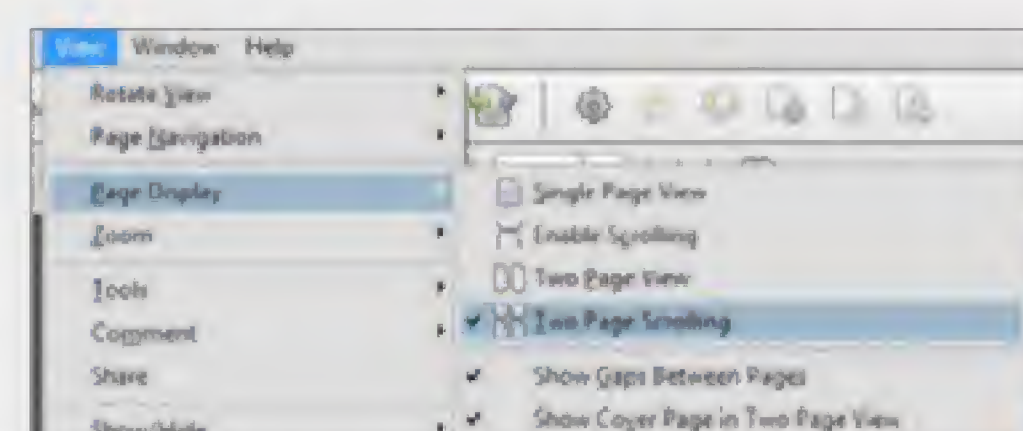
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Top tips for viewing

For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD**

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3. Select **Two Page Scrolling**, making sure that **Show Cover Page in Two Page View** is also selected.



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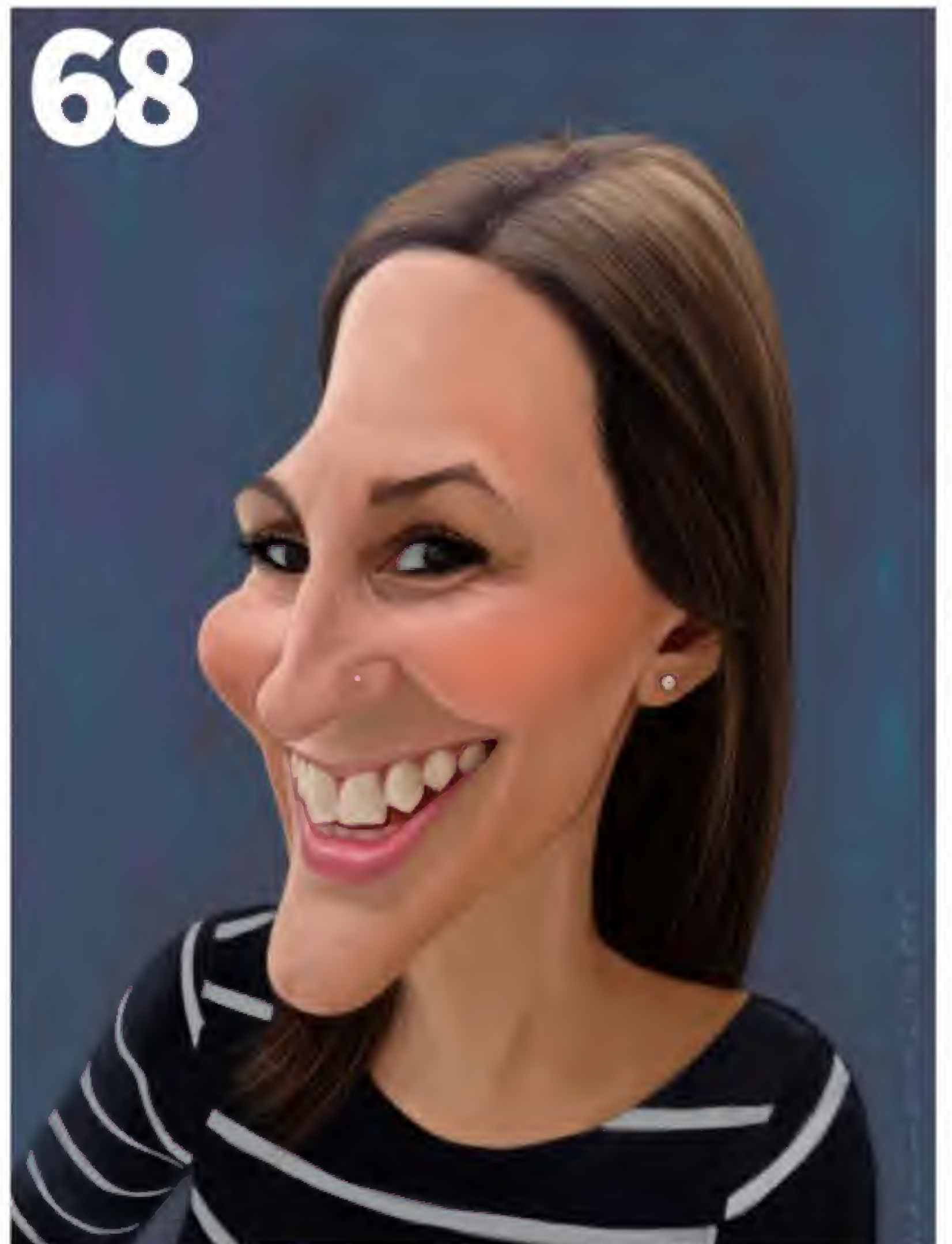
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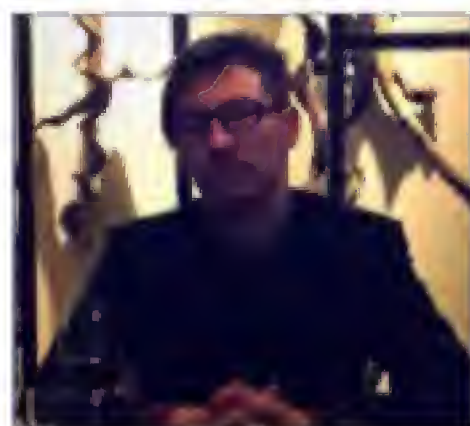
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The Artist



Geoffrey Ernault

geoffreyernault.com

Interviewed by:

Jess Serjent-Tipping

Geoffrey has been digital painting for over six years. He started freelance work about three years ago and is now working at Guerilla Games as a concept artist.

Building a career as a concept artist

Concept artist at Guerilla Games, Geoffrey Ernault, shares an insight into how he made it to where he is in the industry today and reveals what we can expect from him at this year's Trojan Horse is a Unicorn

Geoffrey Ernault is a concept artist in the videogame and film industry and began freelancing around three years ago. Having completed a diploma in videogame and animation, Geoffrey started working for clients such as Natural Motion and MPC. With a recent move from Paris, France to Cambridge, UK to work at Guerilla Games (formally SCEE) as a concept artist, Geoffrey finds himself focusing mainly on environments and props.

Geoffrey uses his experiences of traveling when he was younger to fuel his work, seeking inspiration from the places he visited, and turning creepy chaotic ideas into something that's visually pleasing. With his current projects at Guerilla Games under wraps, Geoffrey shares his inspirations and what he's bringing to the table as a mentor at this year's Trojan Horse was a Unicorn!

2dartist: Hi Geoffrey, thanks for chatting with us today! Could you tell us a bit about how you learned to paint digitally, your journey into the industry and how you have got where you are today?

Geoffrey Ernault: Hey! Thanks for the opportunity. I used to draw a lot when I was a kid and one day I received a tablet for my birthday, since I wanted to get into coloring. I ended up joining art communities and discovered digital painting. At some point, I was painting every day to better my skill level. I eventually decided to go to art school, which taught me that if I wanted to get anywhere I had to continue pushing myself in my own free time.

While still in school I started taking freelance gigs – nothing big at first – then I gradually started growing more and more, and with that so did my client base. ►



● *Aenema* was an abstract experiment inspired by Tool's *Aenema* © Geoffrey Ernault



● Geoffrey depicts a sci-fi scene where people harvest fuel from derelict crashed spaceships © Geoffrey Ernault



“My favorite project so far is the one I am currently working on at Guerilla Games. I really enjoy the working environment here and the creative freedom. It’s great being in a team that has a vital role in the industry”

The reason that I am where I am is because I never stopped learning, I am always trying new methods and pushing myself both at home and work.

2da: What was it about the digital tools that made you want to pursue a career in the industry?

GE: Digital tools allow you to make mistakes – it’s not as frustrating as pencil in my opinion. I can just do a new layer and paint something on top for 30 minutes, and if it doesn’t work I’ll just delete the layer and try something else. It basically gives you more control, and allows you to get stuff done quicker, I think, which in the end allows you to explore more and try out stuff.

You can also easily mix a ton of different mediums, like 3D, or even photography.

2da: Could you tell us about your creative process and the software that you use?

GE: I start off with an idea of what I want and then I sketch it for a few days on sticky notes or whatever just to explore different ways I can execute it. Once I have a decent idea of what I can do, I start blocking it out in Photoshop or through 3D programs. I always use references. Then I’ll end up doing color and light tests to make sure it works before I truly commit to the image and start the final rendering process.



● Geoffrey’s *Mechanical Swamp* was created as concept art for a short student movie project

PRO TIPS

Working with dual screens

One of the things I like to do while working is have another window of my current piece opened up on my secondary monitor at the screen’s size. I do this by going to Window > Arrange > New Window for “file name”. This duplicates the window and allows me to work and look at what’s going to be viewed at the full screen size so everything is readable and I don’t over render the small things that will get lost in the big picture.

Force yourself out of your comfort zone

Always try new things and new methods and don’t limit yourself to painting tools alone. Try and learn new things to better your pipeline, like blocking out scenes in 3D or sculpting out ideas in ZBrush that you can use as a base for your final pieces.

2da: Has working on videogame design changed your approach to your own work? What have you learned during paid work that you can apply to personal work?

GE: I am always learning different things about different projects – you have to be fluid in your methods. One process developed for a specific

work or image might give you more tools later on for another image. Also, you have to be very open to making changes if something doesn’t work out. Don’t marry your work.

I’ve also learned a lot about making things functional, and doing actual design. Thinking more about ‘background’ stuff. Also, I’ve learned how to ►

● *Torch From The Sky* was created as an experiment in Unreal Engine workflows © Geoffrey Ernault



■ *Node World* was the result of exploring ideas of a world inhabited by self-built robots © Geoffrey Ernault





🕒 Artist history

Geoffrey Ernault's career up to this point...

2008: Started digital painting

2009: Graduated from high school and went back to France to study art

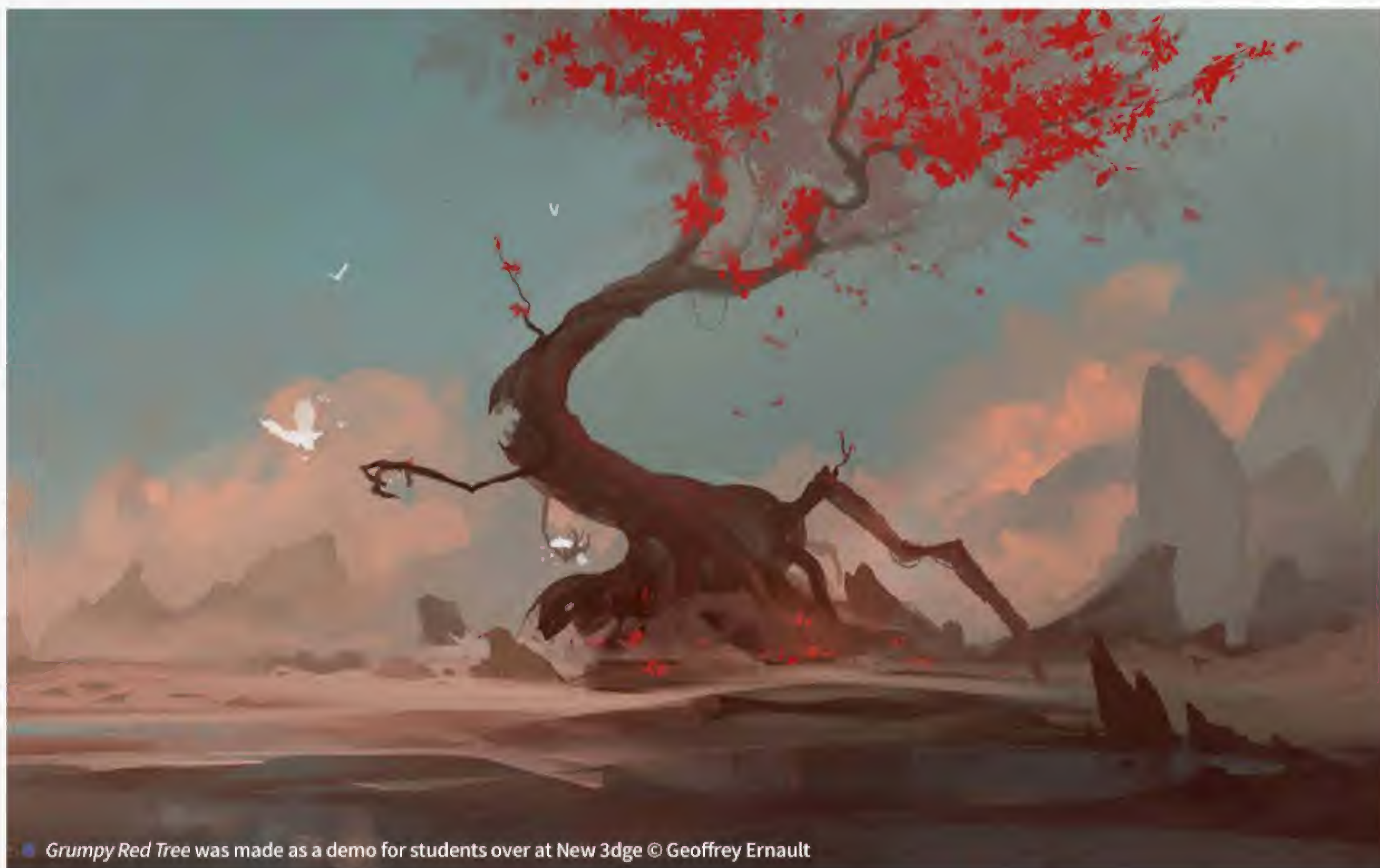
2010: Started freelancing

2012: Taught concept art at Odd School (Portugal) and New 3dge (Paris)

2013: Obtained a diploma in Video Game and Animation Art

2013: Started working for clients such as Natural Motion and MPC

2014: Joined Guerilla in Cambridge



● Grumpy Red Tree was made as a demo for students over at New 3dge © Geoffrey Ernault



● SVship was created as a demo at New 3dge, to demonstrate lighting techniques © Geoffrey Ernault



● *Scrambled Dragon Egg* was also created as a demo at New 3dge School in Paris © Geoffrey Ernault



● Geoffrey explored a boss area environment in his image *Substrata* © Geoffrey Ernault

work for a team and create images that they can be read and then created in 3D.

2da: What has been your favorite project to work on and why?

GE: My favorite project so far is the one I am currently working on at Guerilla Games. I really enjoy the working environment here and the creative freedom. It's great being in a team that plays a vital role in the industry. People here are more open to ideas,

professional and they make sure everything is polished. I'm also not a huge fan of the industry in France, so discovering Cambridge and this studio is really a breath of fresh air.

2da: You have been announced as a mentor at this year's THU (congratulations), what can people expect to see from you and what/who are you most looking forward to seeing?

GE: (Thank you so much!) I'm really excited that they are having me come back and be a mentor! I'll be sharing my own tips and experiences on how I got to where I am now, as well as probably doing demos and giving attendees feedback on their own work.

I am most looking forward to Jeremy Mann and Syd Mead – I have always loved Jeremy's style and I am very excited to meet him. The same goes for Syd – he's a pioneer in his domain and is that someone who I have a great amount of respect for. I am also ►



● The Cloud Bearers was was created using 3ds Max, Greeble and Photoshop © Geoffrey Ernault



● Geoffrey created *Thousand Suns* as a personal project – it depicts a brothel called 'The VixXen' © Geoffrey Ernault



● Geoffrey created *Whimsical Forest* as a color practice. He notes that he felt like painting a unicorn because they are underrated © Geoffrey Ernault



● *The Piano Lesson* was inspired by a psychological thriller © Geoffrey Ernault

looking forward to seeing old friends from last year and all the new speakers that I can learn from!

2da: Can you tell us about any of the projects you are currently working on?

GE: I sadly cannot talk about the current project I am working on, however I really enjoy doing daily speed paints – they allow me to explore new themes and not really think too much about detail or be stuck focusing on little details.

If I really like how one is coming out, I'll end up spending some extra time refining it. I've also been working on new workflows recently, so I believe you'll see more detailed/different images from me

soon (hopefully!) I've been playing around with 3D a bit more than before too.

2da: How do you keep your portfolio up-to-date? Any tips?

GE: I keep my portfolio up to date by constantly working in my personal time. If you work in the industry you usually cannot release your work until the project itself is out, which can take a few years, so I make sure I am always producing and enjoying the process. It's also great to share that with the community and get their feedback. Finally, I try to constantly focus on my weak areas. If I see I'm stuck with something in an image, I usually study that aspect for a few days.

2da: Do you have any advice for artists looking to break into the industry?

GE: Keep pushing yourself and never give up – if you want to work at a certain studio, project, or style, always keep working towards it every single day. There are always going to be people who tell you that you cannot do something – ignore them, they are not you. You get as much as you put into it. Remember that professionals are working over 8 hours a day – you have to make sure that you can rival them, and if you want it enough, you will get there easily.

2da: Who are your favorite artists, traditional or digital, and can you explain why?

⚡ PRO TIP

Think things through

Whenever you are constructing things, try and really think about what you are making. If you're creating a creature, think about where it comes from, how its anatomy would work if it were real, and how its coloring would help it in its environment. What does it eat? Is it a carnivore or herbivore? Is it aggressive and fights a lot? Things like that would impact its design.

for the way he works with textures and still makes it readable; and Kim Jung Gi for the way he is able to sketch everything so perfectly from his imagination and his use of perspective and detail.

2da: Finally, what can we expect to see from you in the future?

GE: I have a lot of art that I am excited about posting from various different projects. I am also working on some new pieces where I am pushing my current work to be more detailed, while also trying to be more graphical. ●

GE: I really like Mr Jack (Luke Mancini), he's primarily a digital artist but he's still amazing with traditional media. I love the way he paints, how he uses colors and light to tell a story in his images.

I also like Sparth (Nicolas Bouvier) for how he plays with shapes and design; Thom Tenery and how he does general mood and lighting in his work; Andree Wallin for his realism and lightings; Jeremy Mann



● *Ishtar* was commissioned as an album cover art for Ishtar, a French metal band © Geoffrey Ernault



● *Relic Theory* was another image Geoffrey created as a demo for New 3dge – this time exploring ideas of color theory and composition © Geoffrey Ernault





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THE ART OF LOÏC ZIMMERMANN

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LUCY MAZEL

Sketchbook

Luky reveals her favorite techniques to transform drawings from the pages of her sketchbook into original paintings, whilst sharing top tips along the way!

The Artist



Lucy Mazel (Luky)

lukymaofficiel.tumblr.com

Lucy graduated in 2009 from a private art school and has been working as an illustrator and comic-book artist since then. Most notable works include being published in many books, famous French magazines and collaborations with art galleries in France and the USA.

Read on to discover top tips for taking your sketches to the next level!

In this sketchbook I will show you my favorite techniques for creating original paintings.

First of all, I have to tell you that I'm not a natural born drawer, so I had to practice a lot and test many techniques before finding the ones that suit me the best. In high school, art lessons were the only ones I had interest in, but I didn't really know how to draw. Luckily, in 2005 I was accepted into a private art school after my graduation, and that's when I really started to learn drawing techniques.

The only technique I was really confident in was making shades of gray with pencil, but after a while, it started to bore me, because I wanted a purer line and to put colors in my drawings. Working on the comic book *Le Petit Prince* with people who used to draw for Disney, taught me a lot about line and movement, and later I discovered the airbrush that could really match my drawing technique and the softness of the characters I wanted to create. In fact I mostly draw only women in my illustrations, because I like the glamorous look I can give them, and I'm really fond of drawing hair.

Illustration is a way for me to relax outside of my work as a comic-book artist. Drawing is my job and my passion as well, so when I want to forget about the job and focus only on pleasure, I make an illustration. I don't have to think about narration or framing and can really express my feelings.

Usually it never takes me more than a day to create an illustration, because I can get really frustrated if I work for a longer time. I start focusing on all the little mistakes and end up hating my work. Well to be truthful, I never like my drawings more than two or three hours, because that would be really conceited of me.

In fact, frustration is my main motivation for drawing. I'm not even 30 years old and I feel like I still have so much to try and to learn. The day I think I've obtained complete mastery of my actual technique, I'll start looking for another one, so as not to feel the frustration of not evolving anymore. I'll try different compositions, different background colors, maybe try some oil painting.

For the time being, I hope you'll enjoy my work and find some interesting tips of mine.

Inspiration and ideas

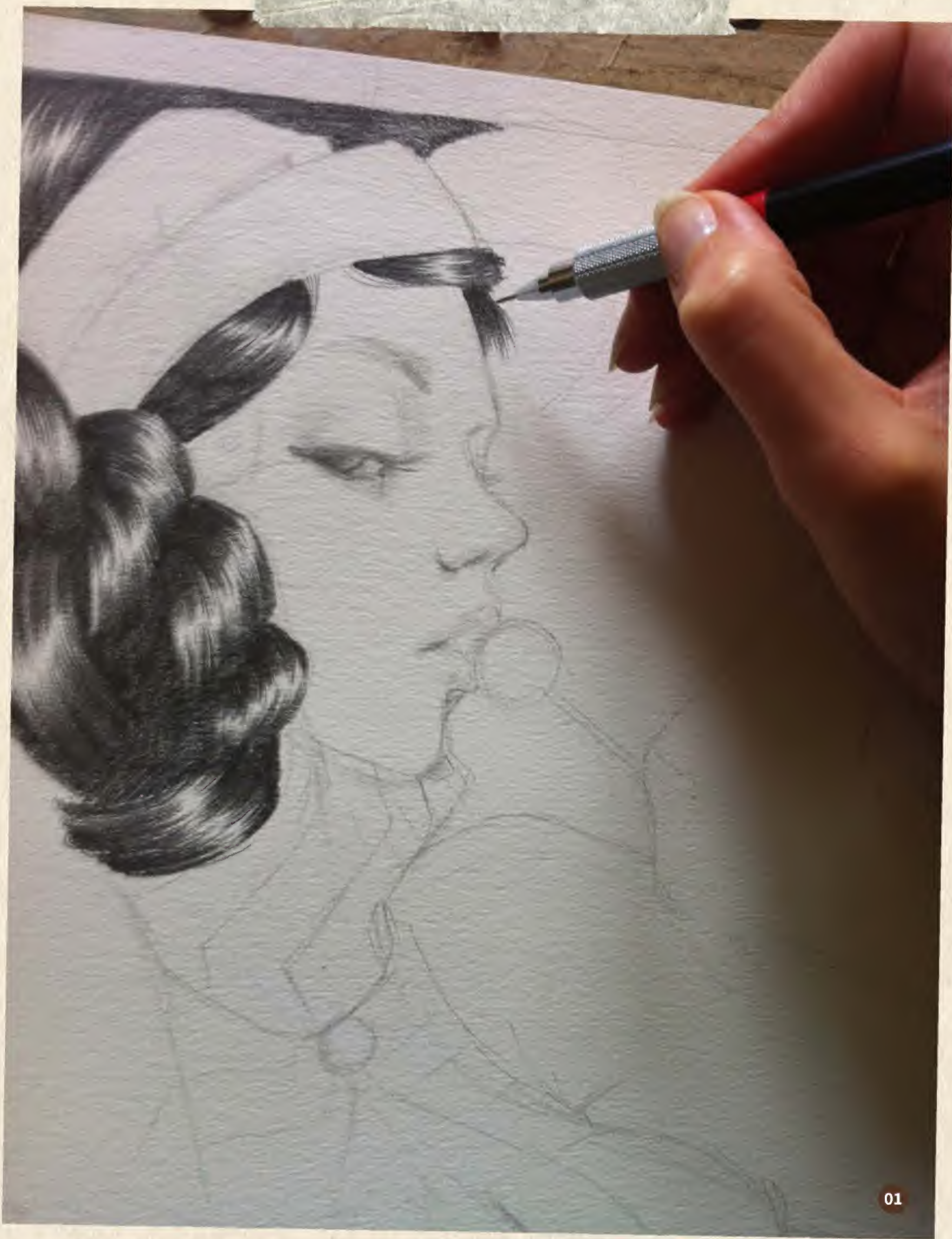
My top influences are Charles D. Gibson and Jeffrey C. Jones, and whenever I see their work I can feel the emotions and the softness that their drawings carry. They gave me the passion of drawing through their art, and I want to share the same feelings when I draw.

I also find inspiration in nineteenth century photos, the intensity of their portraits, the clothing, the architecture and I simply like the spirit of that century.

But I'm a woman of my age and time, so I also find my inspiration in browsing Tumblr and watching a lot of movies and documentaries while I work. Sometimes, I get ideas by watching the world and the people around me and anything can become a source of inspiration if it finds a resonance in my mind.

But for a good drawing, the most important thing is the gaze of the character I'm drawing, and that's why I always start by drawing the eyes first. If they are intense enough, I know that the drawing will be good. ►



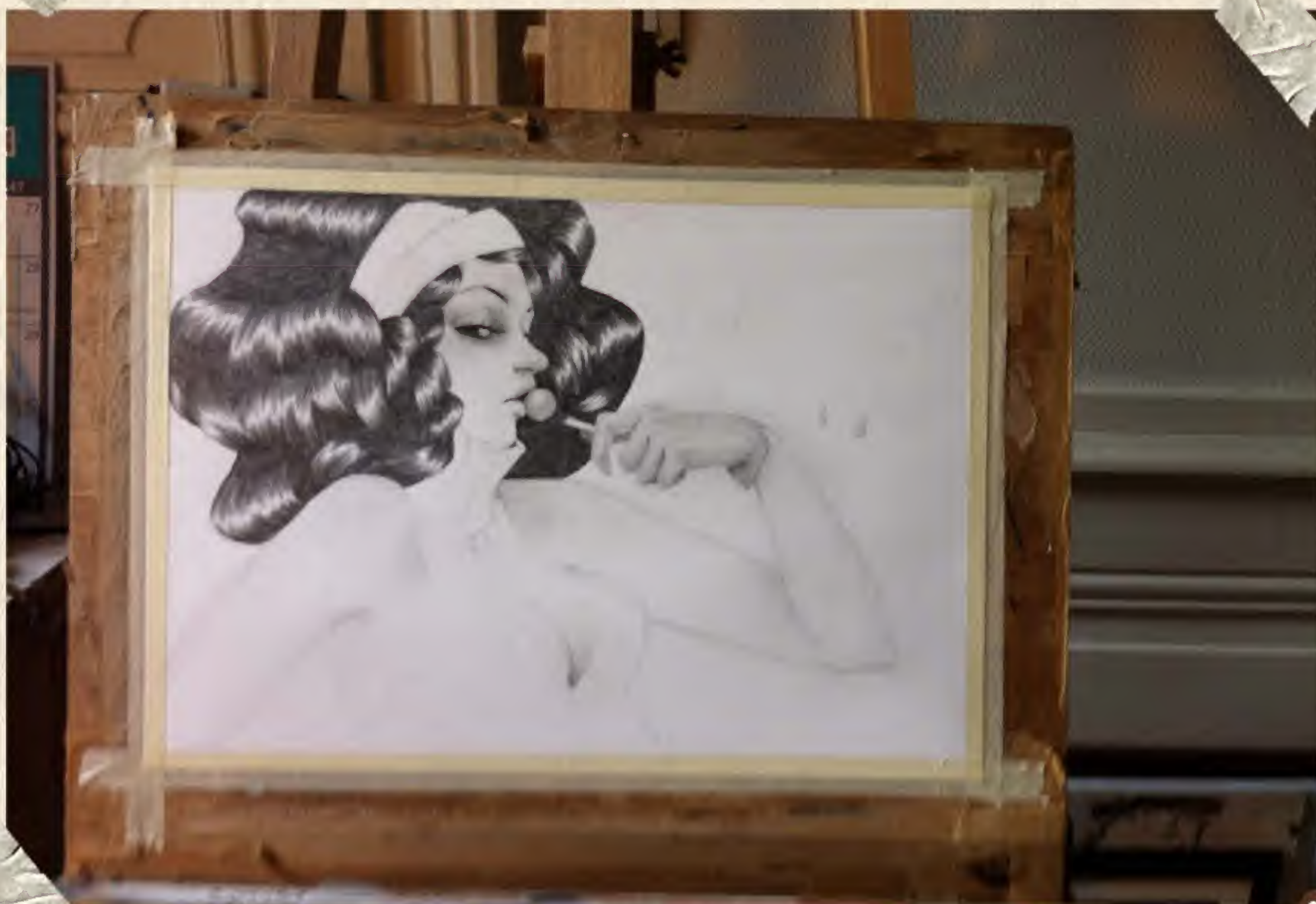


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01 Starting with drawing the character with a pencil, focusing on the gaze and on the hair



02



03



04

Materials

I work only on paper that is thick enough and with a perfect grit such as the Canson or the Lavis Vinci, because it works just fine with the pencil and they have two sides; a smooth one and a gritty one. So, depending on the rendering I want to give, I can choose to use the one I prefer.

I mostly work with pencils, such as the Staedtler Noris H & B and the mechanical Mitsubishi Uni 0.5 for my illustrations, and the Col-Erase when I'm working on comic-books (Carmine Red or Blue for sketches, Black for inking). Then the electric eraser is my weapon of choice when I want to clean the pencil.

As for the paintings, I use two different materials, watercolor and acrylic: For the watercolor, I use a Pentel water-filled pencil on Winsor & Newton paint, and for the acrylic I use my Paasche airbrush bought in the U.S.

I also work in Photoshop for color retakes and numeric painting with my Cintiq. ►

02 Blurring the pencil to create soft shades of gray

03 This is what the sketch looks like before painting – it takes about half a day to get to this point

04 Diluting the ink before air-spraying it – this is important to keep the softness of the pencil marks

PRO TIP

Blurring the pencil using tissues

The tools that you can find nowadays to blur the pencil are uncomfortable to use and too small. They give a dirty rendering and the sounds they produce on paper make me grit my teeth! After trying many other ways to blur, including fabric which gets dirty too quickly, kitchen paper with large cells, I finally discovered the perfect way in something we all have at home: Paper tissues. The rendering is really soft and clean and they are really cheap!





05



06

Sketching techniques

When I work on my illustrations, I mostly use the pencil because it's easy to work on the shades of gray and thus give a proper feeling of light and shadow. I'm not drawn to the ink because, in my opinion, it gives a cold and insensitive feeling to my drawings. The pencil is smoother and you can create some interesting blurs on the image by using it. It's also easier to model and if I miss a line, I can erase it and redraw it as many times as it takes to have the perfect one. Then I use the airbrush, because it's the only technique I have found to preserve my pencil drawing while painting on it.

When I work on my comic-books, I use only the Col-Erase, since I use early story-board sketches until the final inking. I think it gives a more dynamic sense to my drawings and the rendering is really close to animation drawings. In my opinion, comic-books and animation are the same thing and they both create movement from still images.

Then, it depends on the project, but I can work the colors with Photoshop for digital painting, or watercolor. ●

- 05 Retaking small details with a color pencil to accentuate the lips and the bubble
- 06 Delineating the contours of the character with a white Posca
- 07 Painting the background with white Gesso – 3 to 4 layers gives texture to the painting
- 08 Retakes of the light and color in Photoshop



07



08

⚡ PRO TIP

Electric Eraser

I really like it because I can erase small details without erasing the rest. I use it mostly to enhance the lights in the eyes, on the nose, to make the jewelry shine and basically on every element that requires thoroughness. Before I discovered it, I was using a kneaded eraser, but it left traces on the paper and dumped a layer of grease, so it was difficult to cleanly go over it again with the pencil. I don't have this problem anymore!





● The final render after air-brushing, Gesso painting, and finally tweaking in Photoshop



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3dcreative

Issue 106 | June 2014

Light and render textures

Nick G. Gizelis shares how to get the best from your textures with post-production techniques

Master a portfolio still

Livio Rajh talks us through his quick methods for sculpting, posing and rendering a portfolio image

Photoreal texturing tips

John A. Martini explains how he unwraps, textures and shades his incredible still life images

Design compelling compositions

Character design legend Kurt Papstein reveals his ZBrush pipelines for posing his creations

CREATIVE SCULPTING

Federico Scarbini opens the pages of his 3D sketchbook

Yuri Alexander

Create convincing characters

Bring concepts to life with a behind-the-scenes look at character designer Yuri Alexander's Maya and ZBrush workflow

+plus

- 10 of the best digital images
- Photoreal car interiors
- Becoming a 3D polymath
- Model vehicle furnishings
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Art Gallery

Each issue the 2dartist team selects 10 of the best digital images from around the world. Enjoy!



End of Mountain

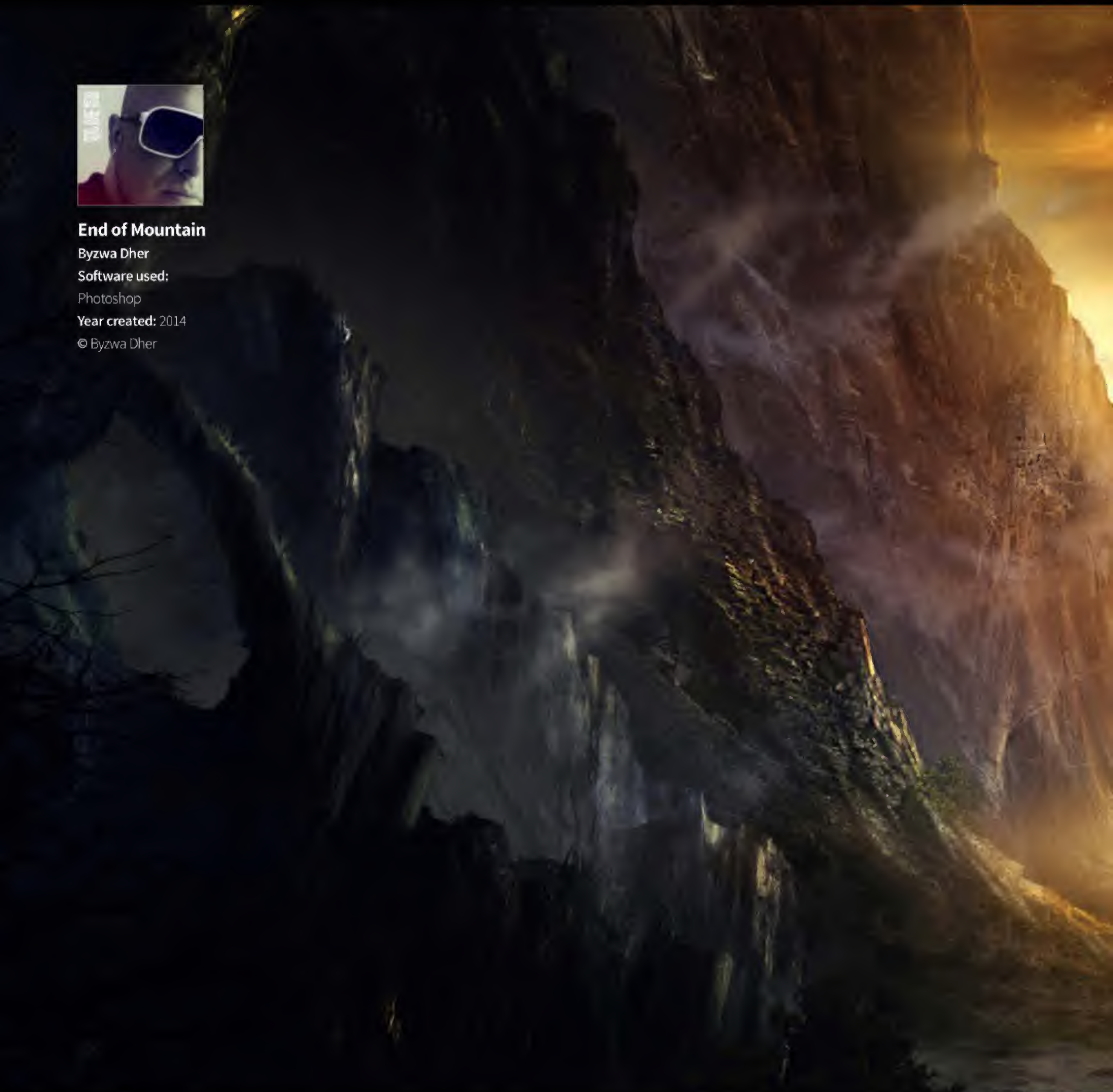
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Tribal Mecha

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Photoshop

Year created: 2013

Web: mouradyu.com



Sorcerer's Hill

Bobby Myers

Software used:

Photoshop

Web: kaio.shen.deviantart.com

Based on a concept by YongSub Noh





Sleeping Titans

Edvige Faini

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: edvigefaini.com



EDVIGE FAINI 2014





Mountain Landscape

Ferdinand D. Ladera

Software used:

Photoshop

Web: ferdinandladera.com

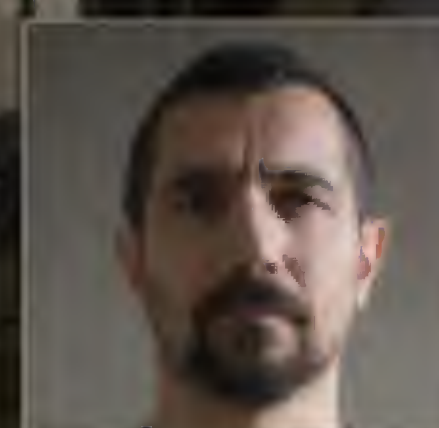
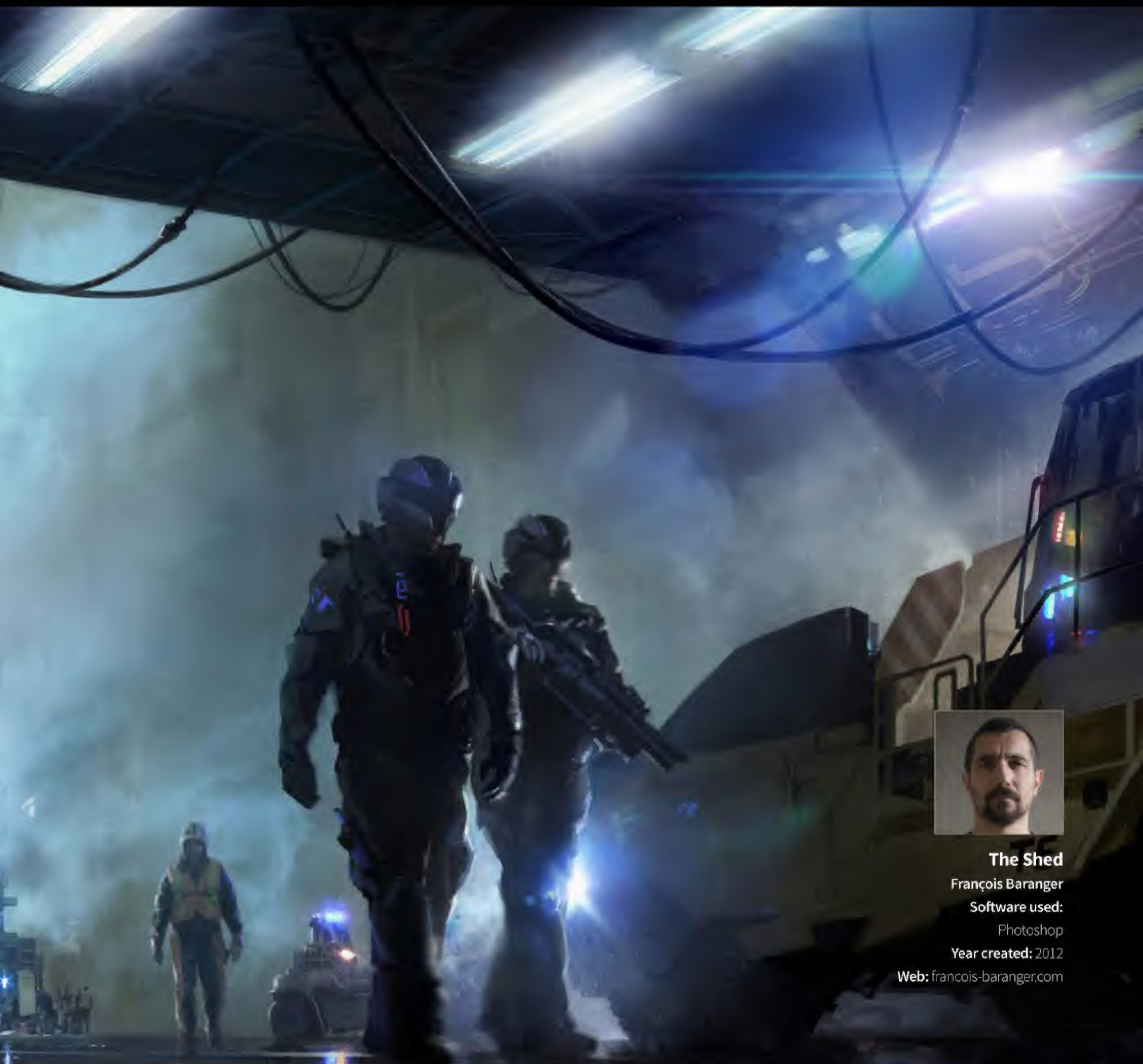
Based on a concept by

Raphael Lüblé









The Shed

François Baranger

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2012

Web: francois-baranger.com





Fantasy city

Derk Venneman

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2013

Web: www.derkvenneman.com

Based on a concept by YongSub Noh



Industrial City

Cyril Tahmassebi

Software used:

Photoshop

Web: serylconcept.com

Based on a concept by Gerhard Mozsi







End of Journey

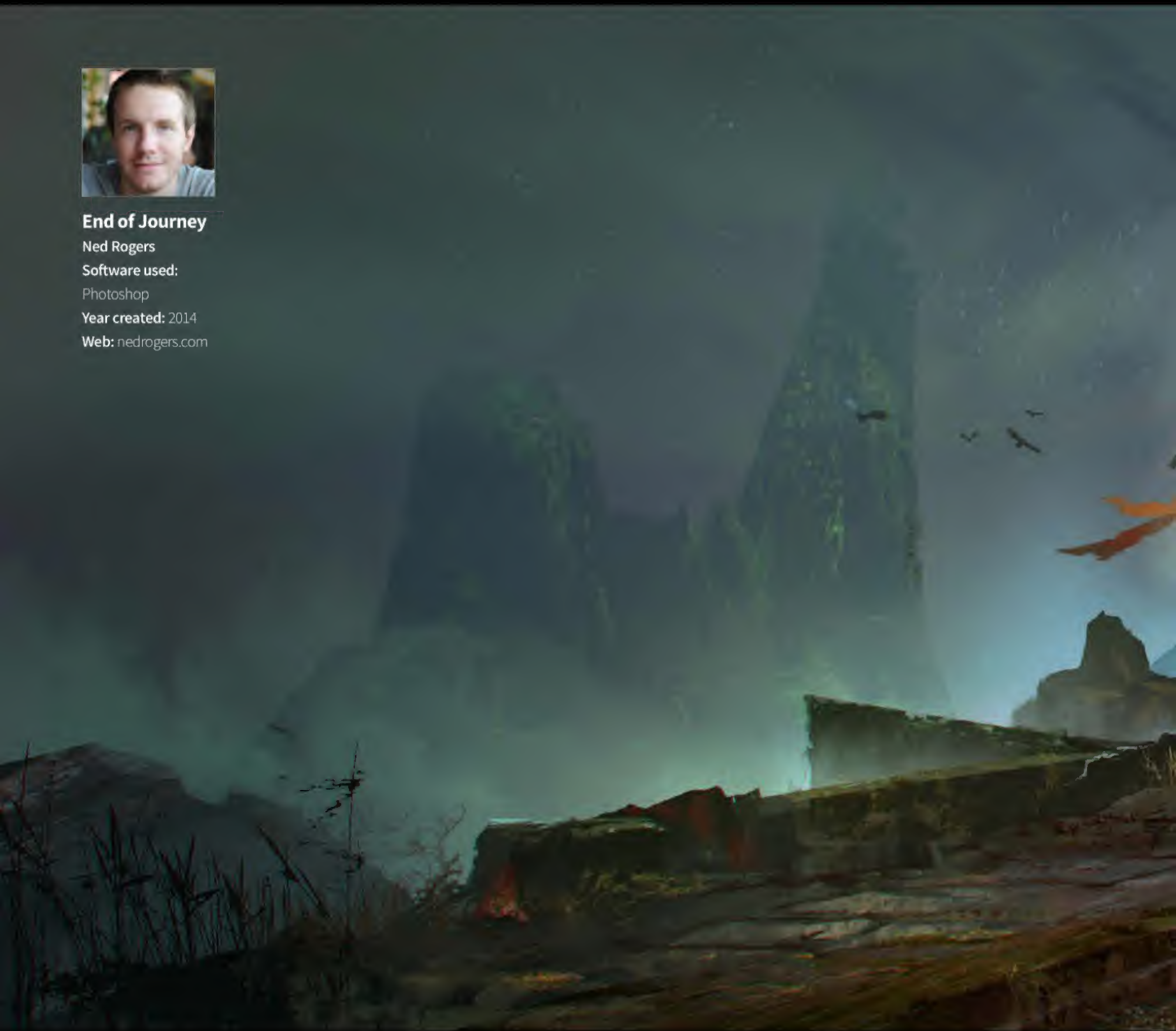
Ned Rogers

Software used:

Photoshop

Year created: 2014

Web: nedrogers.com





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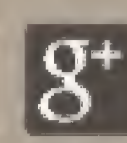
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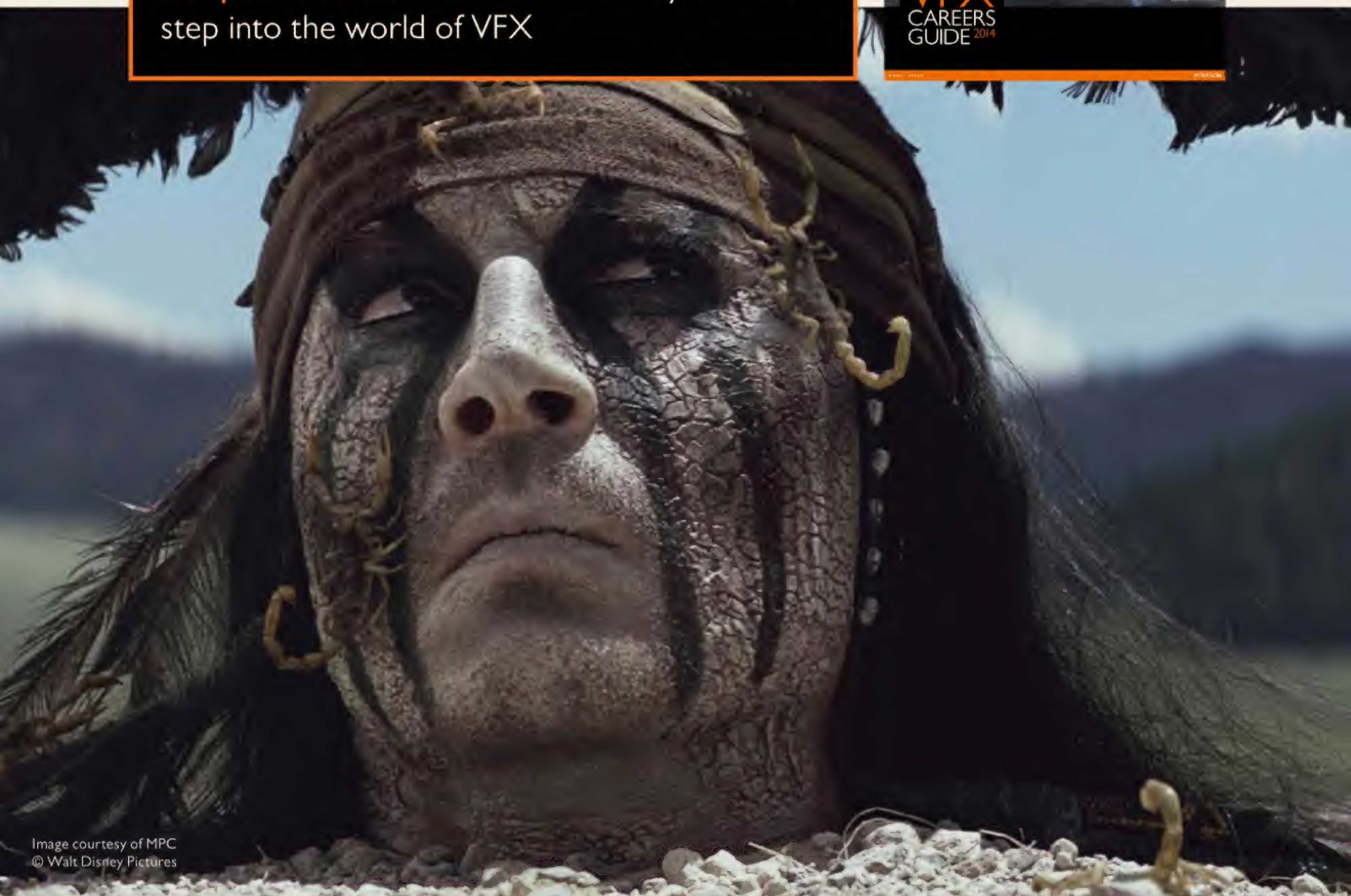
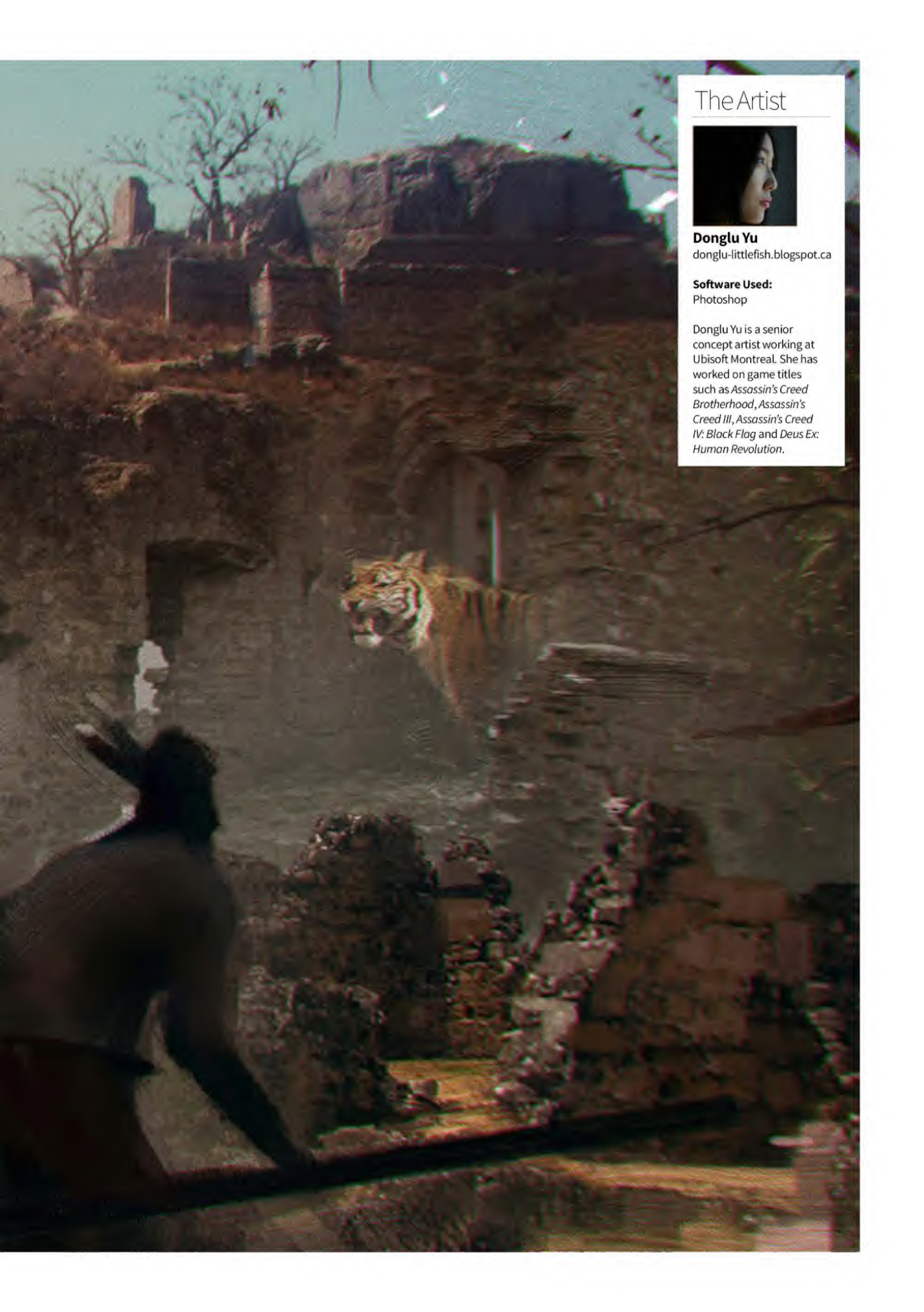


Image courtesy of MPC
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Sketching with texture brushes

As part of a series that takes a look at both the fundamentals of creating visual art and the technical parts of digital painting, Donglu Yu provides detailed, step-by-step tutorials that cover the principal techniques employed in Photoshop to create a complex action scene. In this issue, Donglu reveals ways to generate ideas through using reference images, sketching and texture brushes ▶



The Artist



Donglu Yu

donglu-littlefish.blogspot.ca

Software Used:

Photoshop

Donglu Yu is a senior concept artist working at Ubisoft Montreal. She has worked on game titles such as *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*, *Assassin's Creed III*, *Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* and *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.

Discover how to create a strong starting point for your complex images...

In the following tutorial, I am going to give a detailed walkthrough on the creation of the image *The Hunt*. The tutorial will focus both on the fundamentals of creating visual art and the technical aspects of the digital painting. This scene takes place within some ancient temple ruins, showing a few characters chasing after a beast.

Research, thumbnails, sketches of the ideas: I never under-estimate the importance of the researching stage in the creation of my images. It gives me the opportunity to brainstorm the given subject and find proper designs for the architectural elements and the characters in the image. With the given brief of the image, I can quickly sort out a few key words: ruins, hunters, beast. Then, it will be around those keywords that I will sketch out the ideas.

01 Sketching the ruins: I will start by setting the temple ruins within the environment. I have found some really good references on www.freetextures.3dtotal.com/index.php. It contains a large royalty-free image database, so don't hesitate to use it for finding useful and high-resolution references.

It's also very useful to build your own visual bank by taking tons of pictures during your trips and daily life routines. What is good about them is their copyrights totally belong to you. Not only



01



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can you manipulate them freely for making your own textures and patterns, but you can also make your own custom brushes. When you lack ideas for your next image, just go through your visual bank; some nice sunset clouds, building shapes or a giant old tree root may trigger your imagination and inspire you to come up with fresh, new ideas.

Since the ruins significantly dictate the composition of the image, I choose to start with these. Iconic shapes are the foundations of any good composition, so I pick some gray values and make some blockings of big iconic shapes. At this point, you can use any default brushes that come with Photoshop, however I prefer to use charcoal brushes rather than the round airbrush ones, since they can give you crisp and sharp lines.

02 Adding small details: It is important to spend some time drawing small details on the outlines of those big shapes in order to make them visually appealing and realistic. Those cracks can tell the viewers that these are aged bricks and rocks. Along with the broken shapes, the very few gray shapes that I have just put down are already solidly setting the basic tones for the overall image.

03 Using texture brushes: As I continue with the sketch, I continue using different textured charcoal brushes to add brick details to the basic blocking. I also use photo references



that I have gathered as texture bases that I overlay as reference.

Since we are in the researching phase, it is important to observe the material properties, mainly the old stone bricks in this case. To make the stone brick textures pop out of the image, it is essential to not overpaint every single brick in the ruins, just carefully draw out the ones where the light hits the most, and hint subtly at the rest.

04 Perspective: Atmospheric perspective is another trick to make your image easy to read. The areas that I circled in red have different degrees of value contrast: the two foreground shapes are the darkest facets against the light sky, so they have the highest value contrast in the image. Such contrast makes them instantly stand out in the foreground. As our eyes move further in the distance, we can notice that the central architectural element has less value contrast, as it

is a mid-gray value against a light sky backdrop – this less perceptible value change makes it recede into the background.

Since this is still the sketching phase, I stop polishing the image too much and start exploring with another sketch. ▶

- 01 Blocking out the shapes of the ruins to set the composition**
- 02 Adding small details tells the viewers that these are aged buildings**
- 03 Isolating one or two bricks in the wall really makes them pop**
- 04 Creating perspective by varying the tone of the objects**





“The characters and the ruins should have a similar perspective/horizon line, as it will make our life easier to integrate them in the environment later”

05 A new sketch: Since the first ruins sketch is composed of heavily broken parts, I want to make something a little different for the second one: it's a less destroyed ruin on a hill, and it has a more dominating presence in the image.

I will elaborate the technical aspects of the digital painting using Photoshop, such as how to make custom brushes, in the other parts of the tutorial. But in this researching and sketching part, I really want to put the importance on the

basic artistic notions to make a visually appealing image. Those notions remain the same no matter whether you use traditional tools or digital software for achieving the final result.

06 Adding to the composition: After completing the second ruin sketch, I find something is lacking in the image, even though I do like the massive shape of the ruins. I think that it is because the sketch is missing some depth, especially some foreground elements, to lead the viewers' eye into the image.

Suddenly the ruins become alive – they tell a story. They start to show that back during the temple's glory days, the people would follow the path to climb up to the hill, to the central part of the temple for worshipping their God.

07 Sketching the characters: I am pretty satisfied with the environment now, so it is time to do some sketches of the characters as we move forward in the process. As the ruins are static visual elements, it would be nice to add some motion in the image with our characters who are chasing after a wild beast. It should be appropriate for the story to have the characters as native people living on this land since the time of their ancestors.

I use some big brushstrokes with the intention of sketching out the movements of the hunters, without worrying too much about their designs. I make more sketches, paying attention to creating depth with the positioning of the hunters.

The characters and the ruins should have a similar perspective/horizon line, as it will

make our life easier to integrate them into the environment later. Now they are all approximately at our eye level, so if you want to save some time, don't sketch the characters from a bird's eye view or from a low-angle view unless you just want to experiment freely and have some fun.

08 **Close-up details:** I had the hunting mood going on with my last character sketches, so I decide to create a close up of the native. He has some fundamental features of a native: dark skin, and a clear and hard facial bone structure, along with a few feathers as decorations on his headwear. I am not sure if this close up will be useful for the final painting, but doing some side studies on the topic is always good, as reference, to have a better understanding of the image context.

09 **Finalizing the characters:** To finalize the character sketches, I draft a dark back view of the hunter. It can be very useful as a foreground for the final painting as this back silhouette can lead the viewers' eye into the image for the hunting action.



07

After doing all those sketches, I now have a pretty solid understanding of the image context, and am very confident to start the black-and-white painting for the final image. From here, we need

to blend these sketches into a more complex and finished composition with a strong, convincing storytelling characteristic. ●

- 05** Creating something a little different for the second sketch
- 06** Building up the sketch to enhance the narrative and story
- 07** Sketching characters on the horizon line

- 08** Drawing extra versions of the characters broadens your knowledge and skill on the topic
- 09** Finishing the black-and-white sketches



08



09

XXXX

CHAPTER 02 CAN BE SEEN
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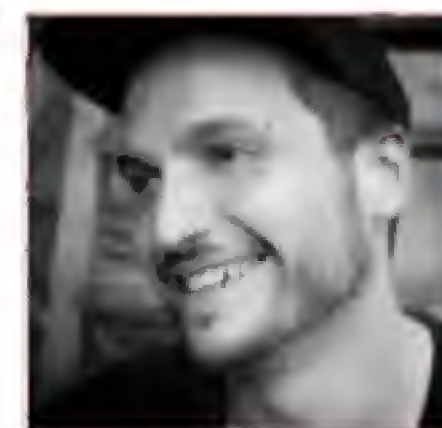
Adapt interior lighting conditions

As part of a series that takes a look at creating lighting effects for different times of day, Nacho Yagüe adapts a premade midday scene to portray a drastically different light direction. Here, he describes the best techniques you can use to create an appropriate mood and atmosphere for a scene at dusk [▶](#)





The Artist



Nacho Yagüe

nachoyague.net

Software Used:

Photoshop

Nacho Yagüe is a concept artist in the videogame industry who has worked on projects such as *Splinter Cell: Blacklist* and the upcoming *Assassin's Creed: Unity*. He currently works at Ubisoft Toronto (Canada).

**DISCOVER HOW
TO CREATE A
MIDDAY SCENE**

.....
CHAPTER 01 CAN BE SEEN
IN ISSUE 101
2dartistmag.com

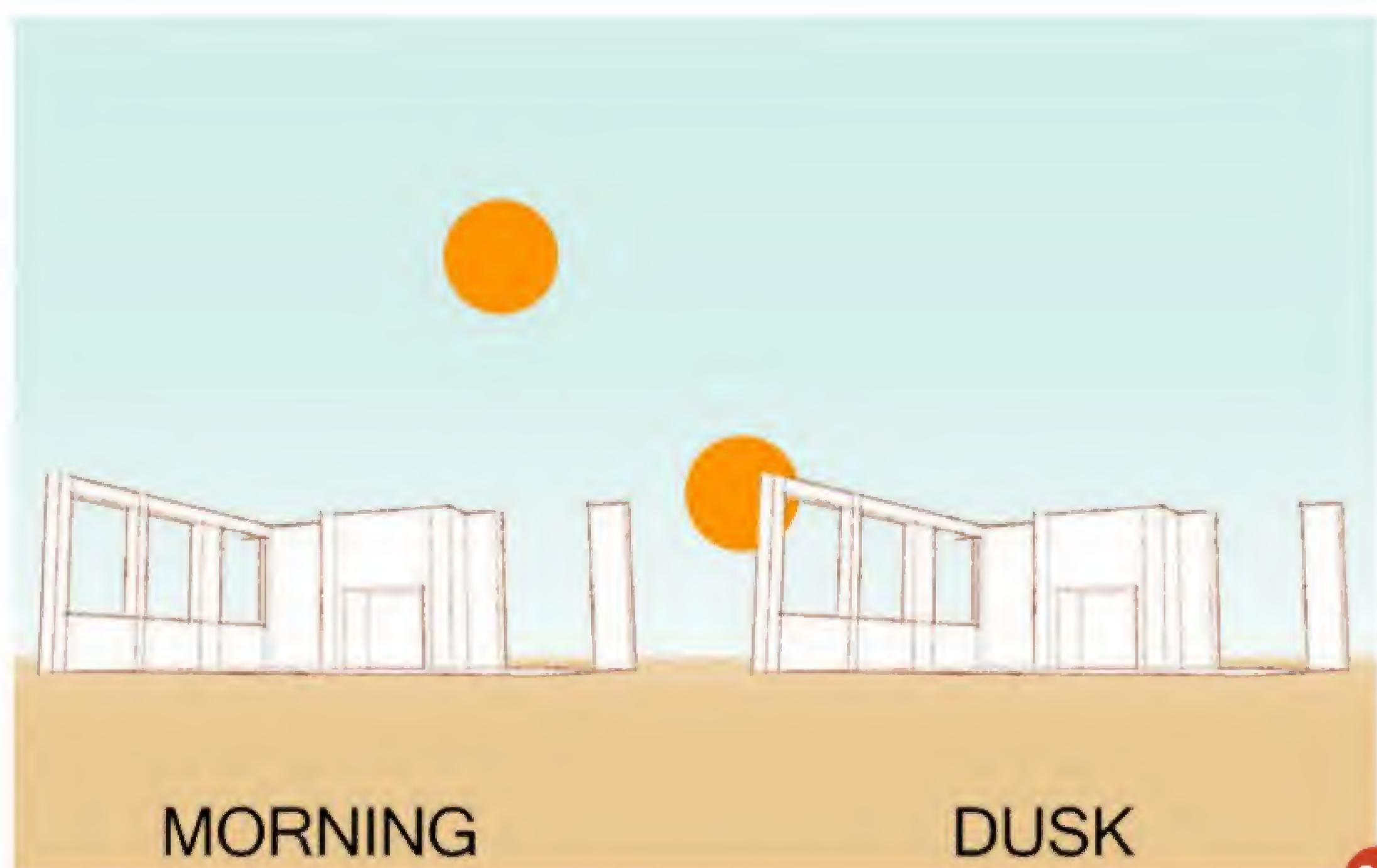
Discover how to adapt the lighting conditions in a premade scene...

In this chapter I'm going to speak of something that comes up a lot when I'm working – how to deal with changes of mood or light in a piece you already made. I'll explain how I shift the mood of the piece: *The Playground: Morning version* into a scene at dusk. I will explain the general steps I follow, and offer some tips to keep in mind when applying the changes.

01 Setting the light direction: Before I start, I make a mental diagram of where the light is coming from in each setting. Having that in mind helps me to understand how the light and shadow will interact with the elements in the room.

The amount of light coming through the window will change the mood completely, and will react with the different materials in many different ways. If you check around the room you are in right now, and then close the curtains or turn on the lights, you will observe that everything around you will shift; the colors, the light refractions, the shadows, and so on. You have to keep these in mind every time you paint something.

In this case the sun is setting, so it will generate long, elongated shadows and the colors will take on a warm tone.



“I keep tweaking the Color Balance on every layer and also adjust the brightness and contrast as appropriate”

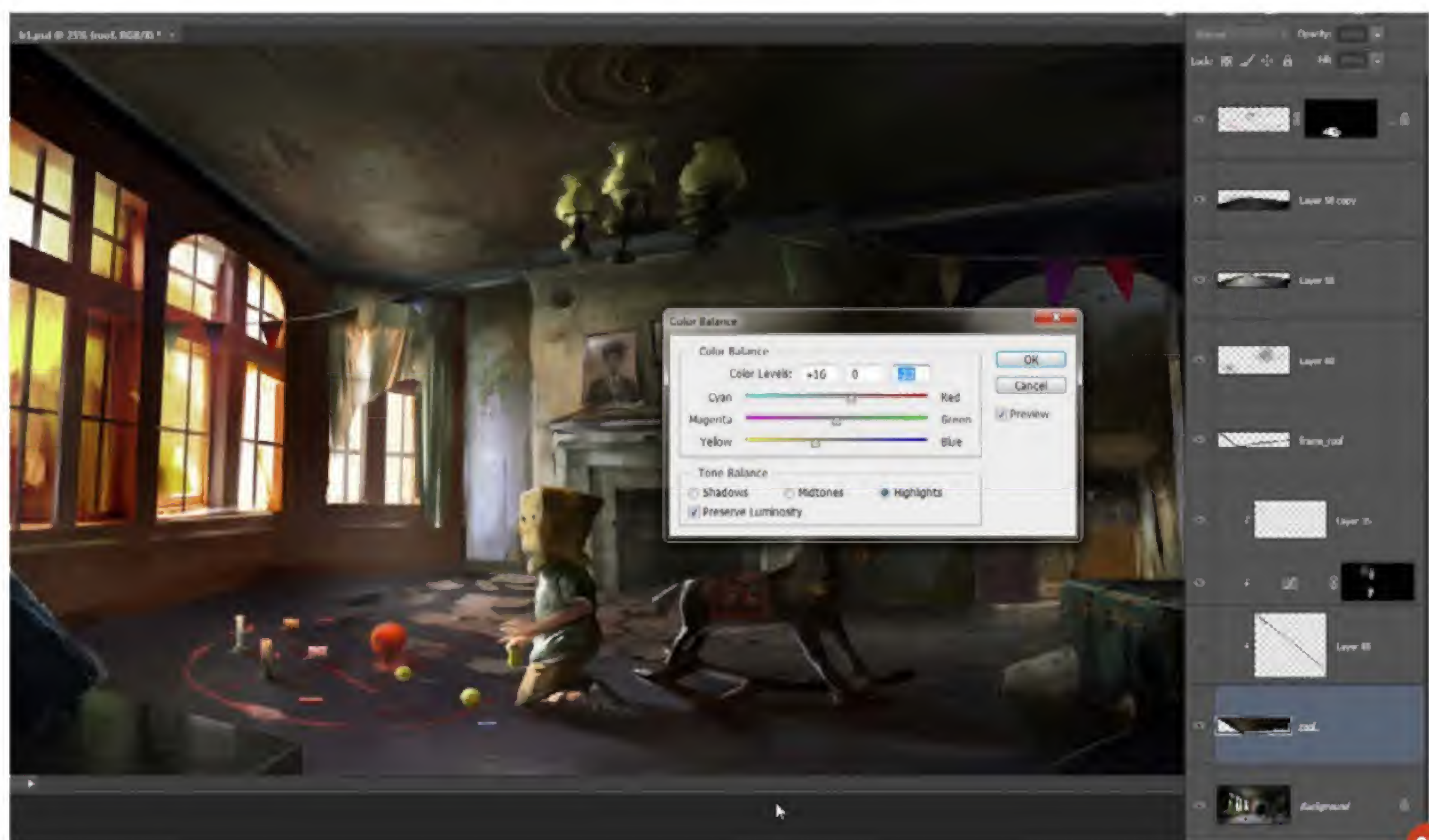
02 Color Balance: Once the image is separated into layers, it is very easy to make tonal changes. One of the advantages of having the image split into pieces is that you can tweak the tones and values separately without affecting the rest of the image.

Here I tweak the Color Balance settings (Image > Adjust > Color Balance) on each asset separately, and I also lower the Brightness (mostly on the right wall). There's a very strong light coming from behind which will cast a large shadow on

the opposite side – in this case, on the wall and window frames.

At this stage I'm just working on the overall tone without giving importance to the strong light and shadow. I will add them in the next steps.

03 Tone and highlights: I keep tweaking the Color Balance on every layer and also adjust the brightness and contrast as appropriate.



All the changes I'm doing have to be done according to the first diagram – always having in mind where the light is coming from. I won't be adding any artificial sources of light so I will try to keep a strong sense of sunlight coming through the window.

I try to keep the floor tones as neutral as possible, because I will contrast it with a bright light later on. I also remove the shadows in the morning version as I will add the new ones in next steps.

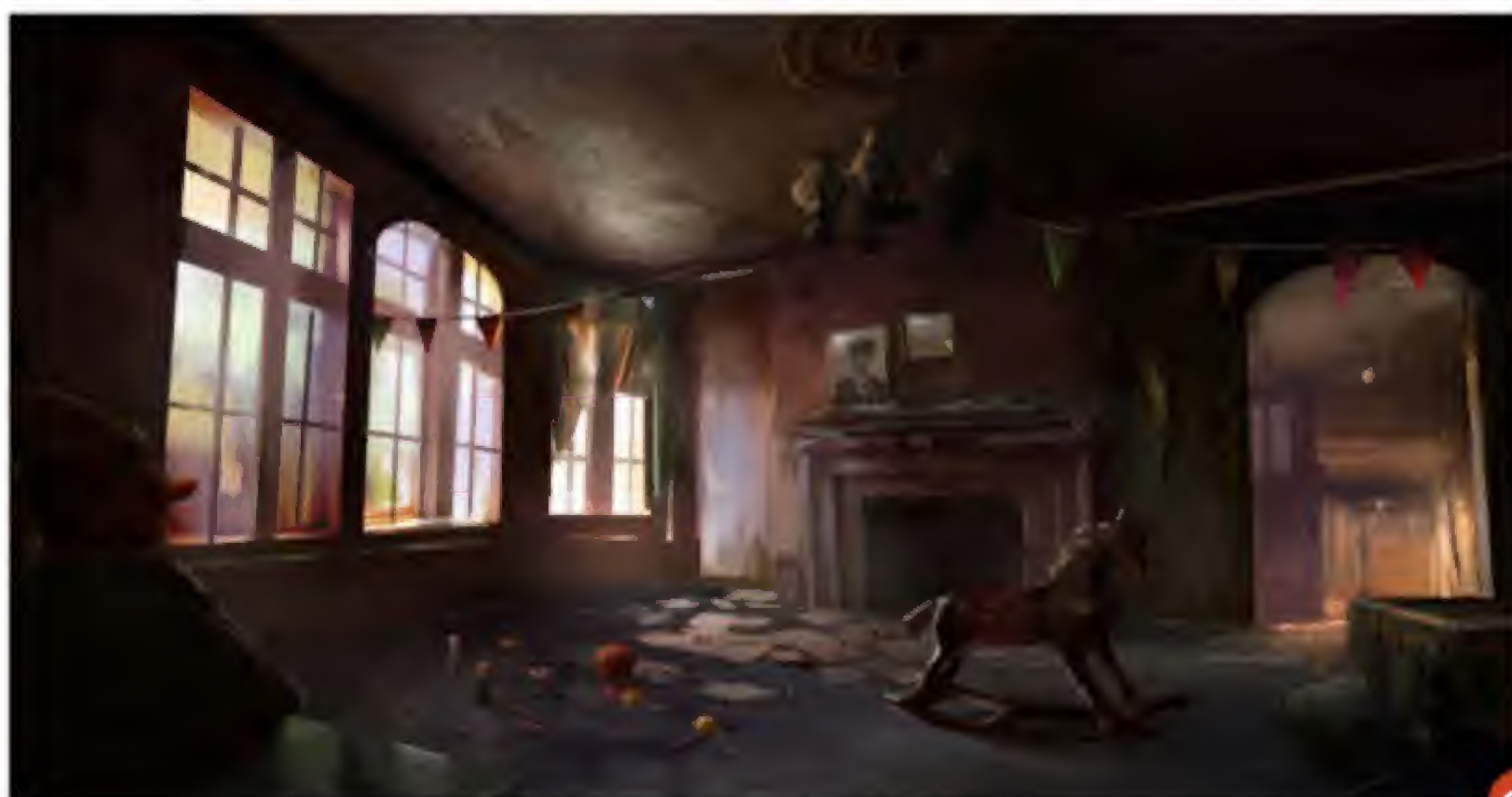
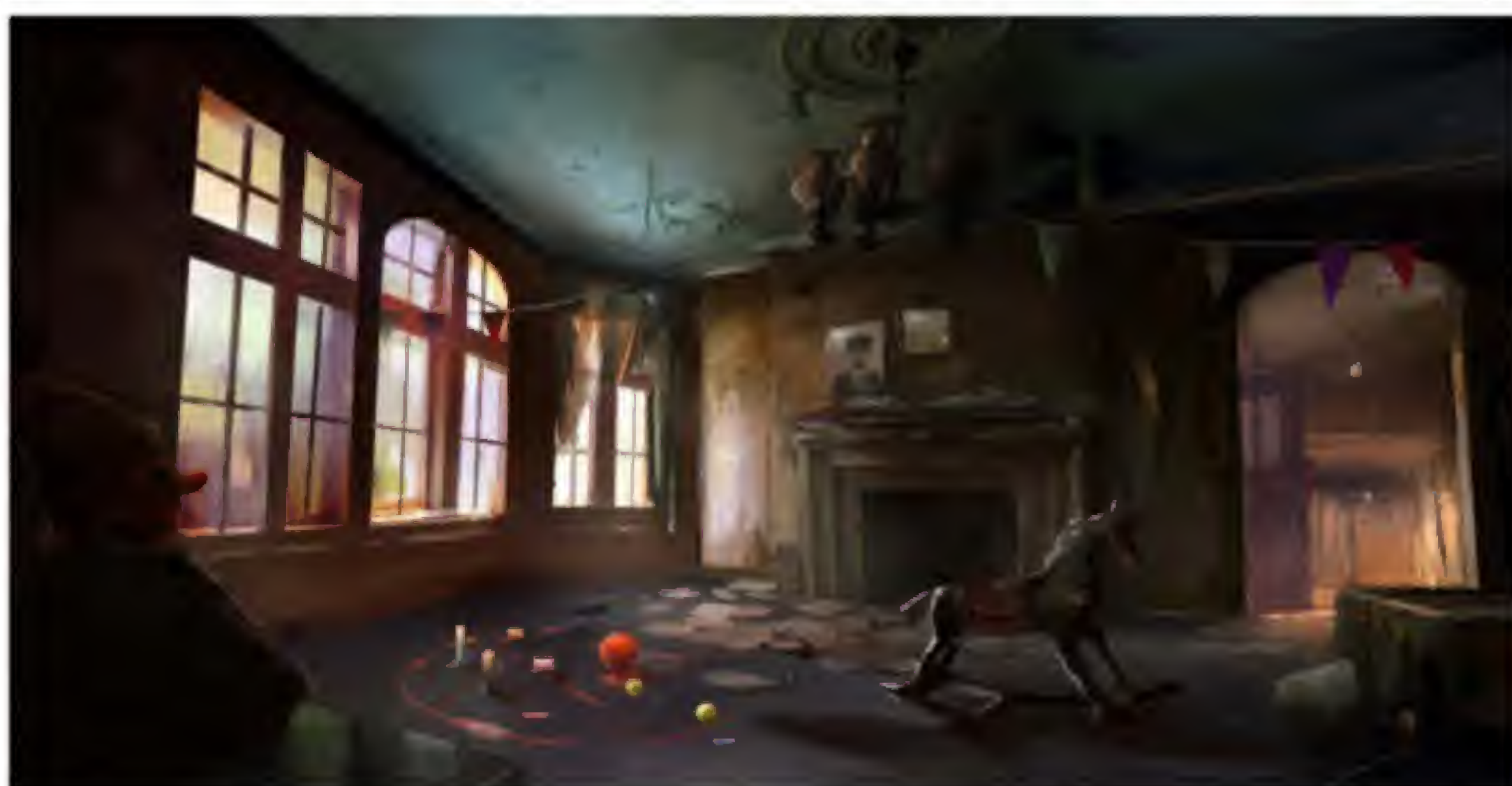
04 Adding the light I: It's extremely easy to change the tone. I draw the shape of the light coming through the window using the Selection tool, and then I add the adjustment layer in Curves mode in the selected area. ▶

- 01** You can see the sun position that will define the mood of the scene
- 02** Changing the Color Balance and brightness of the overall image
- 03** The process showing how I change the overall tone and values
- 04** Adding some light with an adjustment layer in Curves mode

⚡ PRO TIP

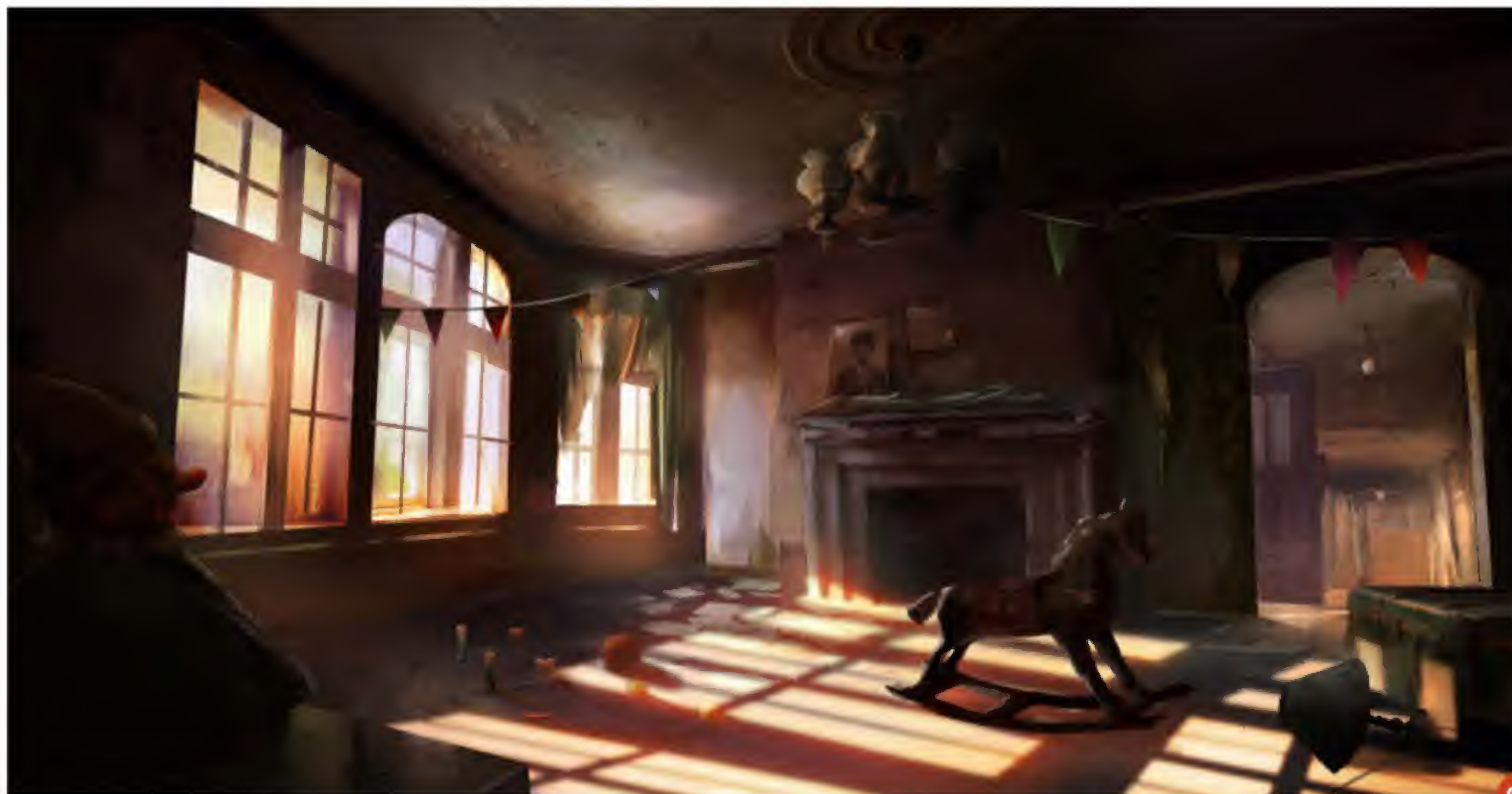
Avoid boring palettes

On a painting you just don't emulate reality – sometimes you enrich it with more saturated tones or a different approach in your color palette. Don't be afraid to add more flavor to a scene by trying different color swatches. Try to find different variations of the same color and study how light affects these colors.



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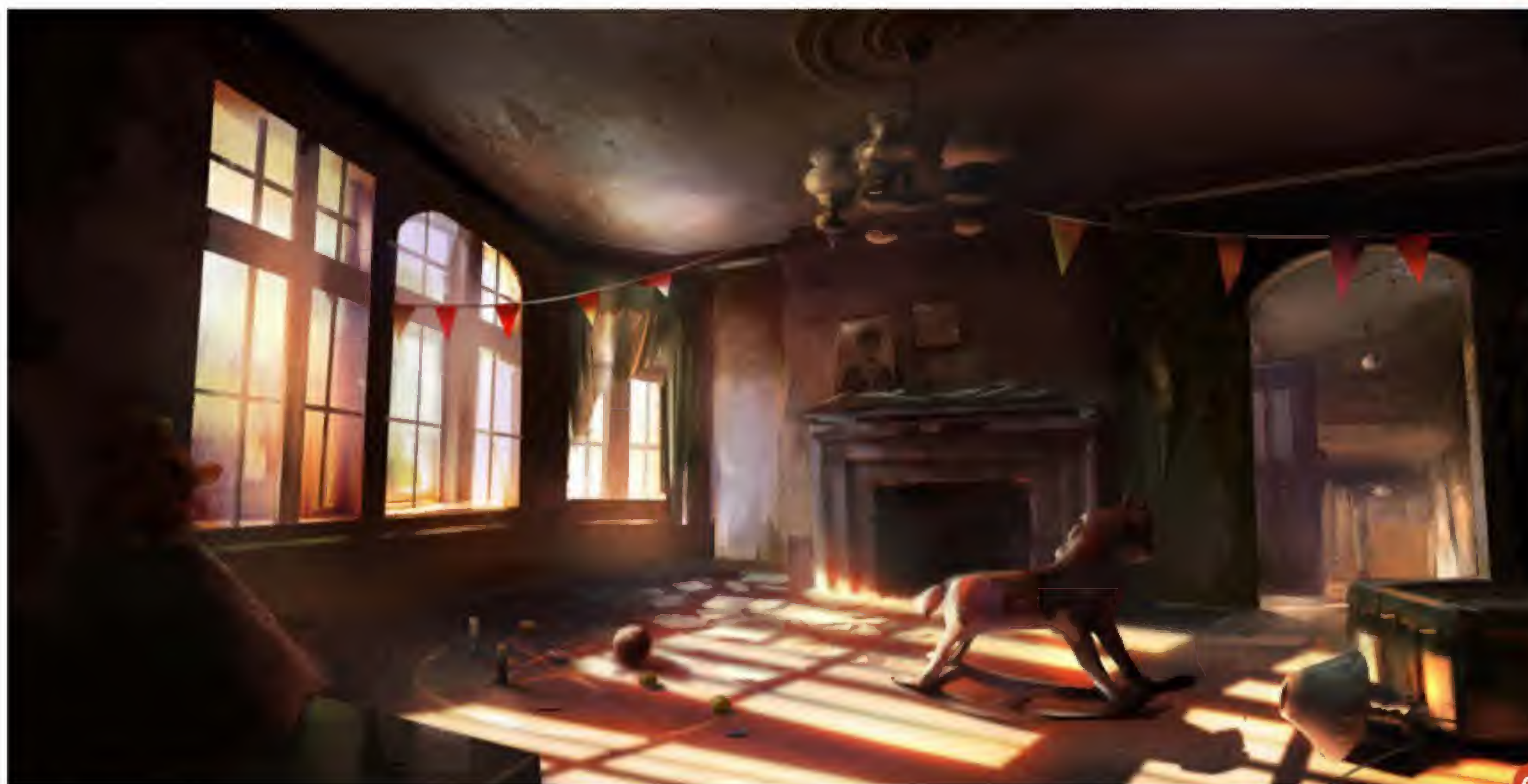


05

05 Adding the light II: Once the basic light is set, I keep adding more layers to adjust the tone. I want to reinforce the feeling of dusk, so I paint the shadows with warm colors. I also add some cold purple tones to balance the colors out.

Generally I play with layers in different modes, such as Overlay, Color Dodge and Screen. As you can see the shadow also receives some bounce light and absorbs colors from the environment.

To make the shadow more realistic, I add an extra layer in Lighten mode with a warm tone and paint over the blurred edges of the shadow.



06

06 Shadows and bouncing light: Now that the light direction is set, I keep adding bounce lights and shadows. In my opinion, adding the light first is very important because it will define how shadows and colors will interact. As the sun is very low, it will project long, strong shadows.

As you can see in the image, the light bounces off the floor and affects areas like the fireplace, ceiling and lamp. This is why I paint a source of light coming from below. You can see the bounce light in the corners of the fireplace and on the lampshade in the right-hand corner.

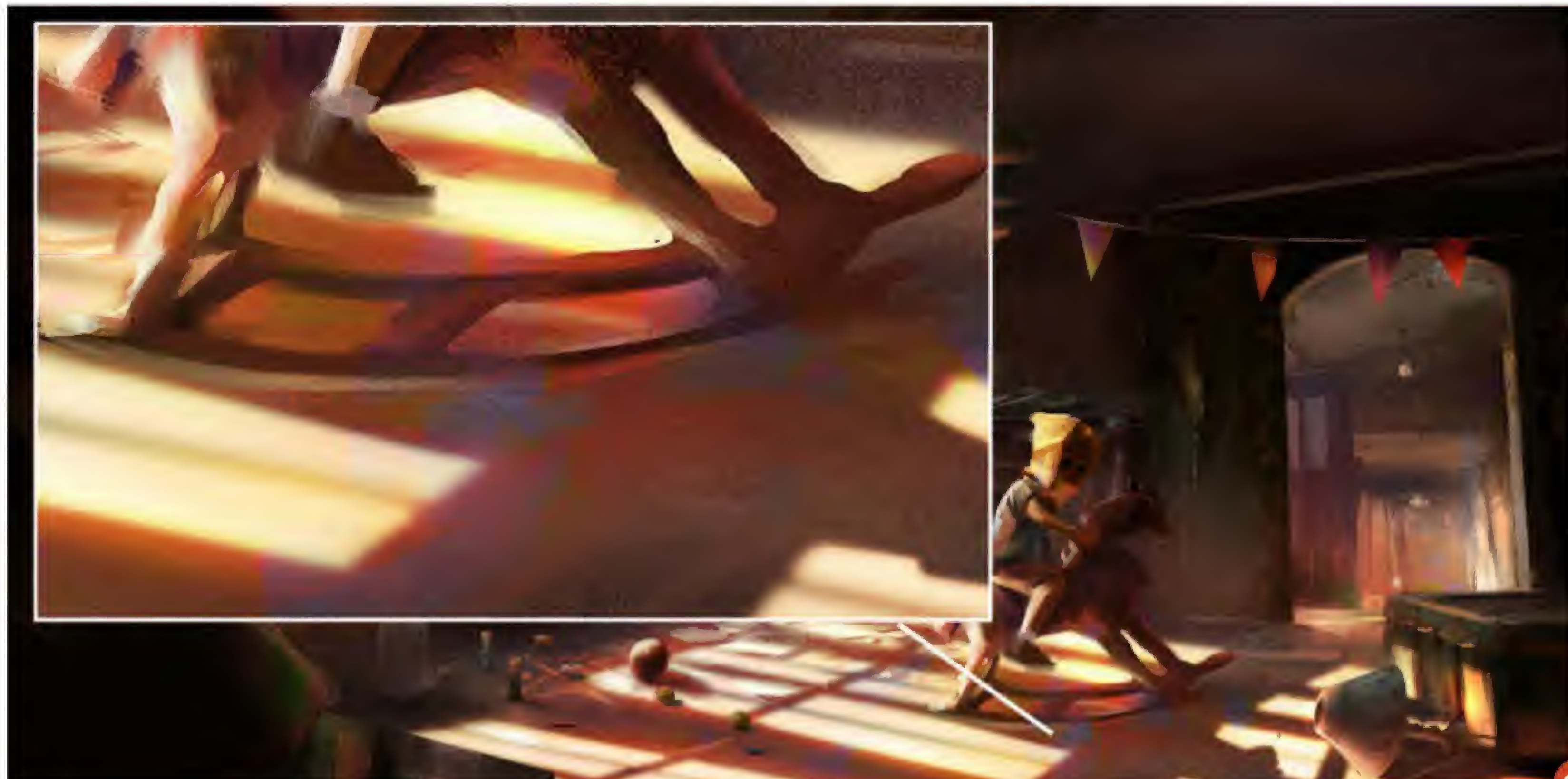
07 Adding the character: Although the main purpose of these tutorials is to show a room with different light settings, I want to add some storytelling elements, so I change the position of the kid (this time, riding the wooden horse) and draw a new expression on the paper bag. I like to add these kinds of subtle details that are imperceptible at first glance but can be spotted on a second or third viewing. It's just about adding extra flavor to a picture – these small details are the things that make a picture more appealing.



07



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08 The triadic color scheme: For this image, I'm looking for harmony in colors. The main base is a warm orange tone, but I always tend to add other tones to make the image more interesting. This is, again, about adding more flavor. A monochromatic image or a scene with a basic color scheme is very boring to the eye, and so adding other tones will make the colors pop out. Of course you need to find the proper colors that will work in harmony with the main one.

For this image, I choose a triadic color scheme. Triad colors combine every fourth color on the basic color wheel. This color scheme results in a vibrant palette, even when using unsaturated tones. One color (in this case orange) will dominate the scene – the other two (greens and violets) will be used for accenting objects.

09 Adding splashes of color: As I said before, adding other tones following a

certain harmony will enrich your painting on so many levels. Just check paintings from Sargent or Sorolla and analyze the color palette. This is just one of the reasons why their paintings look vivid and harmonic.

To my scene, I add some green and purple tones in certain elements, like the curtains, but generally also add some spots of these tones all over the composition.

I usually set a new layer in Hue mode at 70% Opacity, and with a texture brush I add some random and spare brushstrokes with green and purple tones. You can see a zoomed-in portion of the picture here, showing how these brushstrokes emphasize and complement the base color.

10 Last touches: For finalizing the scene, I turn the image to black-and-white one last time to check if the values are correct. I add some atmospheric light in Screen mode

to reinforce the dusk feeling and correct some value tones. I paint some noise with a Soft Round brush with a grain texture, and sharpen the edges with Filter > Unsharp mask. I slightly correct the brightness with Image > Adjust > Brightness > Contrast, and it's finished. ●

05 Applying extra layers of color to the shadow cast from the window

06 Bounce lights and shadows in different elements of the scene

07 Adding storytelling elements into the scene like a character

08 A diagram of the triadic color scheme

09 Detail of the shadow with tones of green and purple

The Artist



Nacho Yagüe
nachoyague.net





The Artist




Mark Hammermeister

markdraws.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Mark Hammermeister is an award-winning illustrator from the Detroit area. His clients include LucasFilm, *Playboy*, *The New York Observer* and *HorrorHound*, and he has received awards from *The Communication Arts Illustration Annual*, *3X3*, *Creative Quarterly* and *ImagineFX*.

Caricature painting tips

Mark Hammermeister provides a step-by-step walkthrough of the techniques he uses to create a realistic caricature of a young woman, from taking time to observe your references to adding those all important details! 

Hammermeister

Discover the art of digitally painting the perfect female caricature from references...

I've heard that some caricature artists have a more difficult time caricaturing women than they do men. For me, the process remains basically the same for either gender. Ultimately, it's still a matter of observing shapes in the face and exaggerating appropriately. For this tutorial, I decided to do a caricature of my niece Nicole, in order to show how I go about doing a caricature of a pretty young woman and still manage to create an attractive painting.

Often when I'm doing a caricature of someone who isn't famous, I'm only provided with one or two photos to work from. This isn't always ideal, because photos lie all the time due to changes in lighting, poor angles and many other factors. Unfortunately the image you're provided may not be a great example of what the person really looks like.

In this case, because I had complete creative control, I took several photos of Nicole from multiple angles, which gave me not only many more choices for reference, but also gave me a much better idea overall of the shape of her individual features and how they fit together. I've also included the main four brushes I used throughout this painting to enable you to follow along.

01 Take time to observe: As you can see here, I took many photos of Nicole from different angles. Even the photos I don't end up using provide me with lots of valuable information in determining what she really looks like. I choose a nice three-quarter view of Nicole's face from all the photos I took.

A three-quarter view is often a good choice for caricatures, because it gives you a clear view of the shape of the cheekbones, nose and chin.



01

I take a few moments to develop an overall impression of the shape of her face. Not only are her features long and angular, but they all form a very definitive curve that point in the same general direction. I draw in some red arrows over the top of the reference photo to give a clearer idea of what I see when I look at the reference image.

I sketch basic shapes and keep building on those shapes with new layers upon layers until I achieve what I think is a decent likeness. A lot of the time you may have the urge to skip the thumbnail stage and head right to the painting stage. Resist this urge. If your thumbnail resembles the person at a very tiny size, it will look even better by the time you're ready to make a bigger sketch. ▶

02 Time to thumbnail sketch: I start sketching by first converting my reference image on an adjustment layer to black-and-white so that I'm not influenced by colors at this stage. Then I zoom the image out to roughly a postage stamp size. Next, I create a new document that's 2,700 x 3,600 pixels and zoom that way out as well to approximately the same tiny size as the reference.

01 The red arrows give you an idea of the curved directional thrust of all Nicole's features

02 By sketching at a small size, you can more easily achieve a likeness by not getting caught up in the tiny details



02

“You’ll want to make the Eyedropper tool your best friend. I constantly sample colors, first from the palette, and eventually I’ll be doing it solely from the painting itself”

03 **Cleaning up my sketch:** After I’ve come up with a thumbnail sketch I like, zoom in to a larger size and clean up my sketch. I use a basic Hard Round brush with Shape Dynamics and Pen Pressure turned on. I draw a few more layers on top of my thumbnail layer and redraw and refine the sketch until I think I’ve achieved a good likeness.

Even when you feel like you’re done with your sketch, remember, it doesn’t have to be perfect – you’ll be refining the image even further as you paint. Only focus on the major shapes and don’t bother with including any tiny details in your sketch since you’ll be painting those in later. Your eventual goal is to cover the sketch entirely so that you can’t see it anymore.

04 **Blocking in colors:** I fill the background layer with a reddish-brown color, then I set the Sketch layer to Multiply and begin blocking in colors on another layer below that.

To choose colors, I squint my eyes at the reference and begin picking out colors from Photoshop’s color picker that fit the overall hue and value of what I observe. I put little dots of color on another layer that I label ‘Palette’. Over time, I’ll add to this palette and mix colors up between them, similar to how I would paint with real paint.

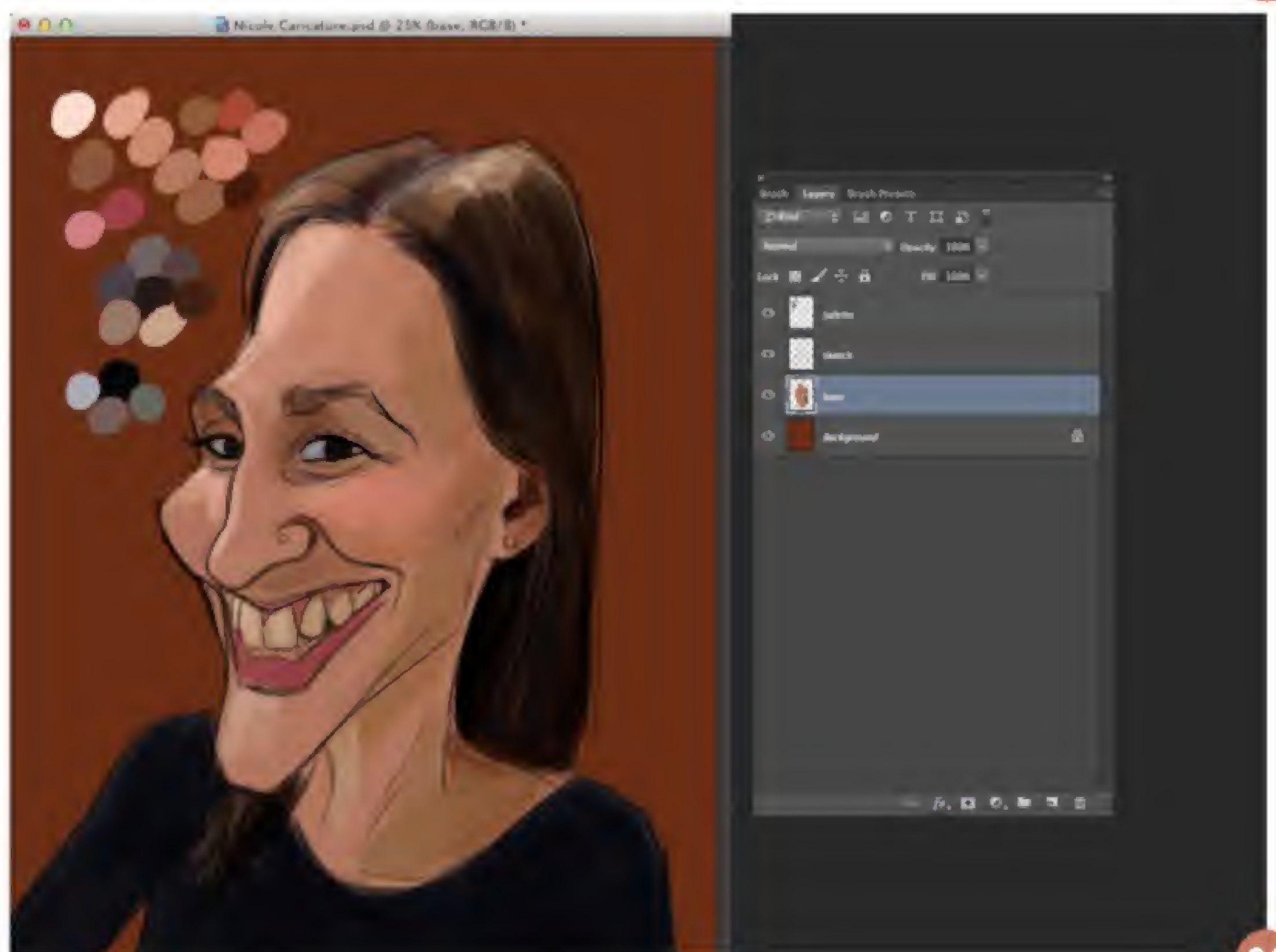
Don’t get hung up on being one-hundred-percent color accurate. You’re an artist, not a copy machine. As long as you’ve established the proper values, you have a lot of freedom over the hues you choose. Also, your color choices will be influenced by the base color you’ve established.

05 **Time to paint:** I’m pretty much finished with my block-in, so now I add another layer on top of my sketch layer where I’ll do most of my painting. I’ve decided I want a cool background, so I roughly paint in a nice blue background. I’m still only using a simple Hard Round brush and one of the basic rough-edged brushes that Photoshop comes with. You’ll want to make the Eyedropper tool your best friend. I constantly sample colors, first from the palette, and then eventually I’ll be doing it solely from the painting itself.

06 **Flipping and correcting:** Throughout the course of my painting I’ll flip it over



03



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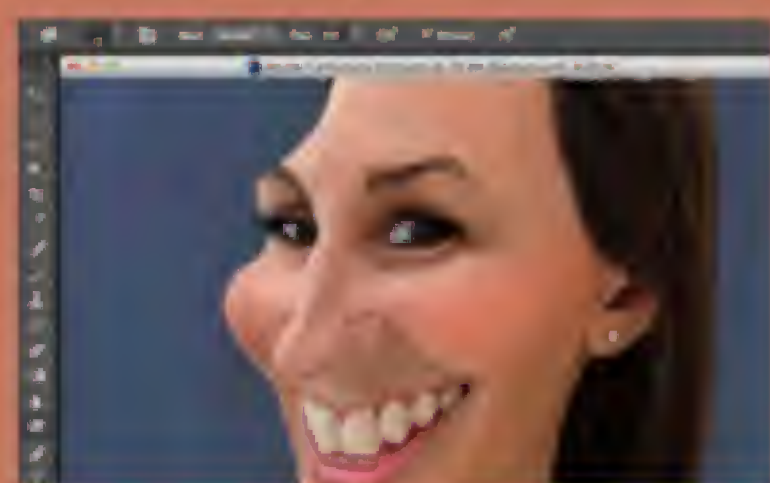
back-and-forth in order to see if I'm making any mistakes (Image > Image Rotation > Flip Canvas Horizontal). You can even record a Photoshop action to do this for you with a single keystroke.

In this instance, I quickly realize after I flip the image that one of her eyes is a little bit too low on the face. So I draw a selection around the eye, then go to Select > Modify > Feather, then go to Edit > Copy Merged. I paste this selection on a new layer and nudge it around with the arrow keys until it's in the right place. By copying and pasting the merged pieces, this will save me a lot of time in the long run overall that might have been spent repainting everything. ▶

⚡ PRO TIP

The Sponge tool

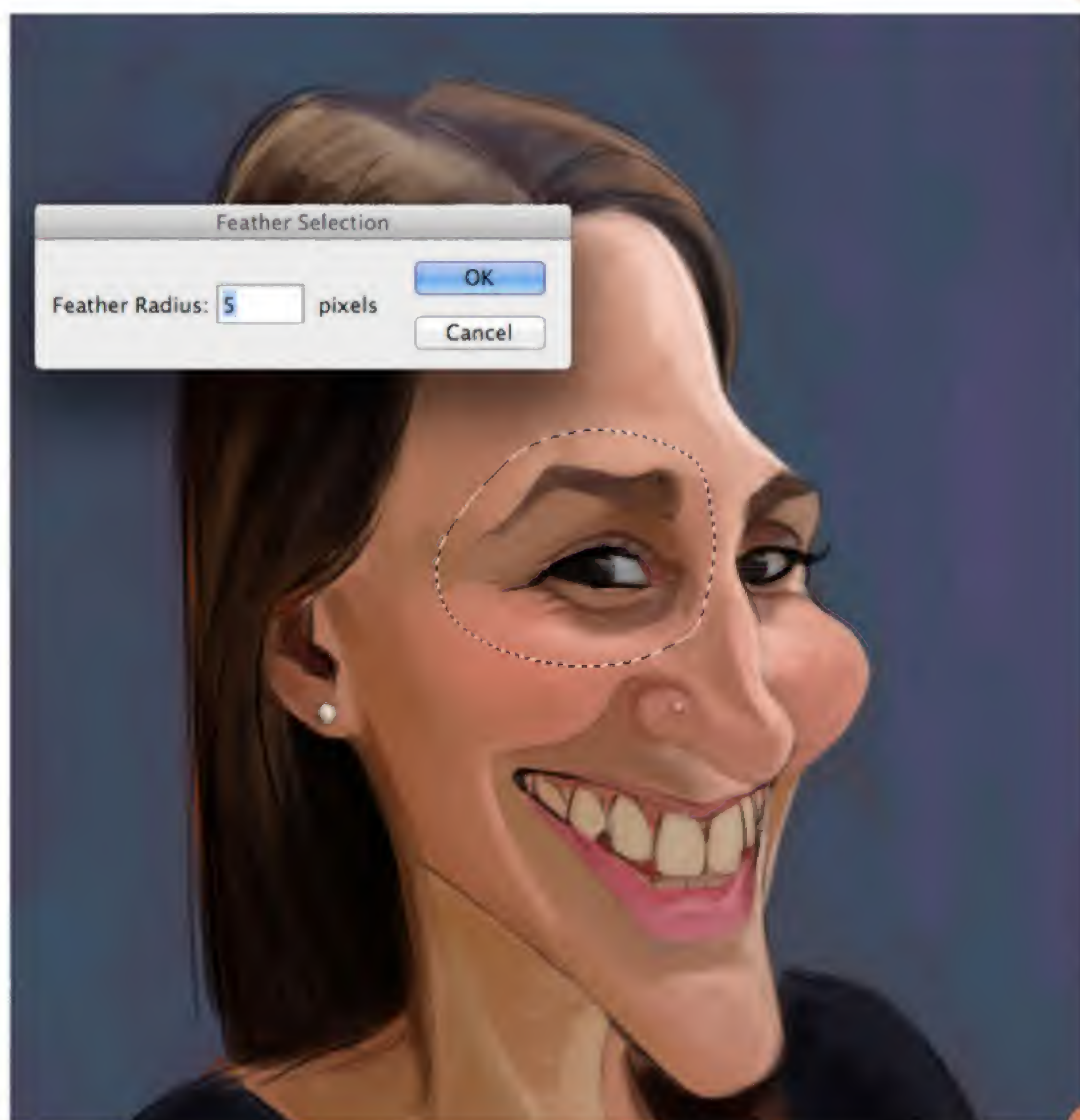
My way of thinking is if you're going to use Photoshop to paint, then you should really USE Photoshop. If you feel like your colors just aren't vibrant enough, one quick way to beef them up is to use the Sponge tool. It's really easy to overdo it with this tool, so I never set it to higher than 10% Flow and set to Saturate. I brush over the cheeks and mouth lightly to warm them up. If I go too far, I can always use the History palette to go back before I used the tool.



- The Sponge tool is a powerful tool for beefing up your colors when you feel they're not vibrant enough



05



06

- 03 Refining the thumbnail drawing until we find a sketch that will form the framework for the painting
- 04 Filling the background with a reddish-brown and blocking in colors below the sketch layer using a simple Hard Round brush
- 05 Changing the background color and painting over the sketch layer
- 06 Instead of repainting the eye, copy the selection and paste it onto a new layer in order to move it around

07 Focusing on the details: I feel like I've established enough of a range of values to finally turn off the Palette layer and begin focusing on the fine details. Eyes are my favorite things to draw, plus they are one of the keys to establishing a likeness, so I zoom in tight on both the area of my reference I want to focus on, along with the same area on my painting, and begin sharpening and tightening up the details.

One trick I've learned in order to get the eyes right is to pay attention to the negative space created by the whites of the eyes. If you draw that shape correctly, it makes it that much easier to get the pupil correct. Nicole has very thick, dark eyelashes and I begin painting these in by creating a new layer and drawing them in, one by one, with a Soft Round brush with Shape Dynamics turned on.

08 Working on the mouth: After the eyes, the mouth is the next most important area to focus on to establish a likeness. Why is that, you might ask? Think about it for a minute – the eyes and mouth are almost always the two areas of a person's face you will focus on when you're looking at them.

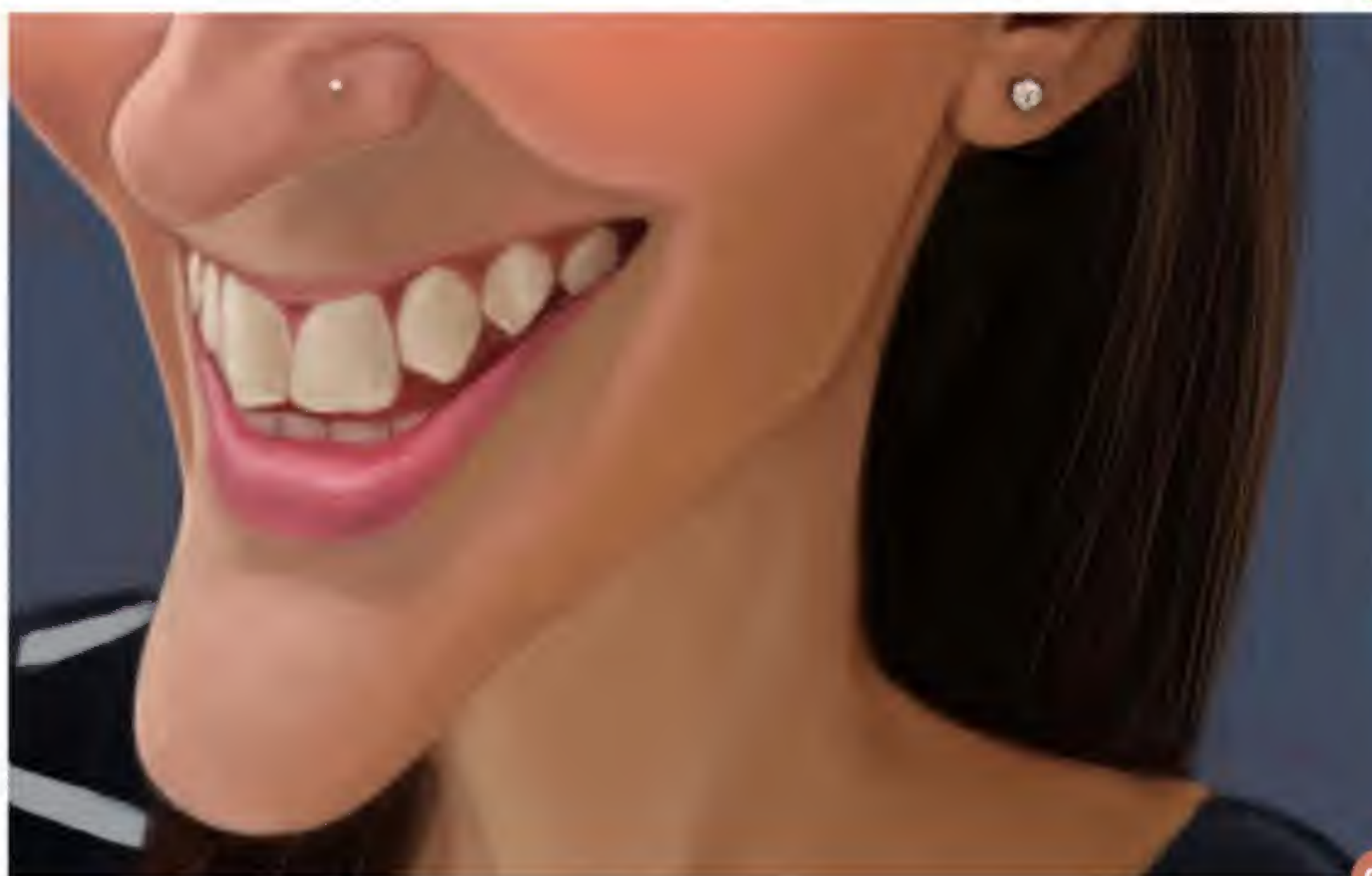
I draw the teeth in separately, then the gums over that and the lips over the gums, building up the structures to make them appear dimensional. Like I did with the whites of the eyes, I pay careful attention to the negative spaces created by the dark areas between the upper and lower teeth, in order to be sure I'm getting the shapes correct.

09 Painting the hair: The hair is almost always one of the last things I tackle. This is because I create a new layer to paint the individual strands on in order to remove them if something doesn't look right. Painting hair is a time-consuming, but fun process.

I've already blocked in the major hair shapes with my other brushes to use as a base. I use a Soft Round brush with Shape Dynamics turned on to give it a point. Then I make lots and lots of long strokes with a 3 or 4 pixel-wide brush.

Hair typically comes together in layered strands, so I pay careful attention to how I'm overlaying light and dark colors to make one cohesive mass. I'll go in later with a big soft eraser and lightly brush over what I've painted to create a sense of translucency and help blend the strands together.

10 The final details: The last things I do are to refine and sharpen any fine details. Since a woman's skin is typically smoother and softer than a man's, I go over the face lightly



with a soft airbrush set on a very low Opacity. On a new layer above all the others I paint in the suggestions of such details as minor skin blemishes and pores using a Soft Round brush with a tapered end. By keeping these things on their own layer, I can then pass over them with a soft eraser to make them blend in better with the layer below.

I also paint the stripes in Nicole's shirt on a layer of their own using a Hard Round brush. Sometimes I will paint in some additional bits of texture into the background and even over my painting itself in order to help to give it a more natural look. ●

07 Zooming into the image and working on fine details like the eyes

08 Focusing on sharpening the details around the mouth to help better establish a good likeness

09 Drawing individual hairs on a separate layer using a narrow, Soft Round brush with a tapered end

10 The final details are painted in on another layer above all the others to establish a sense of realism

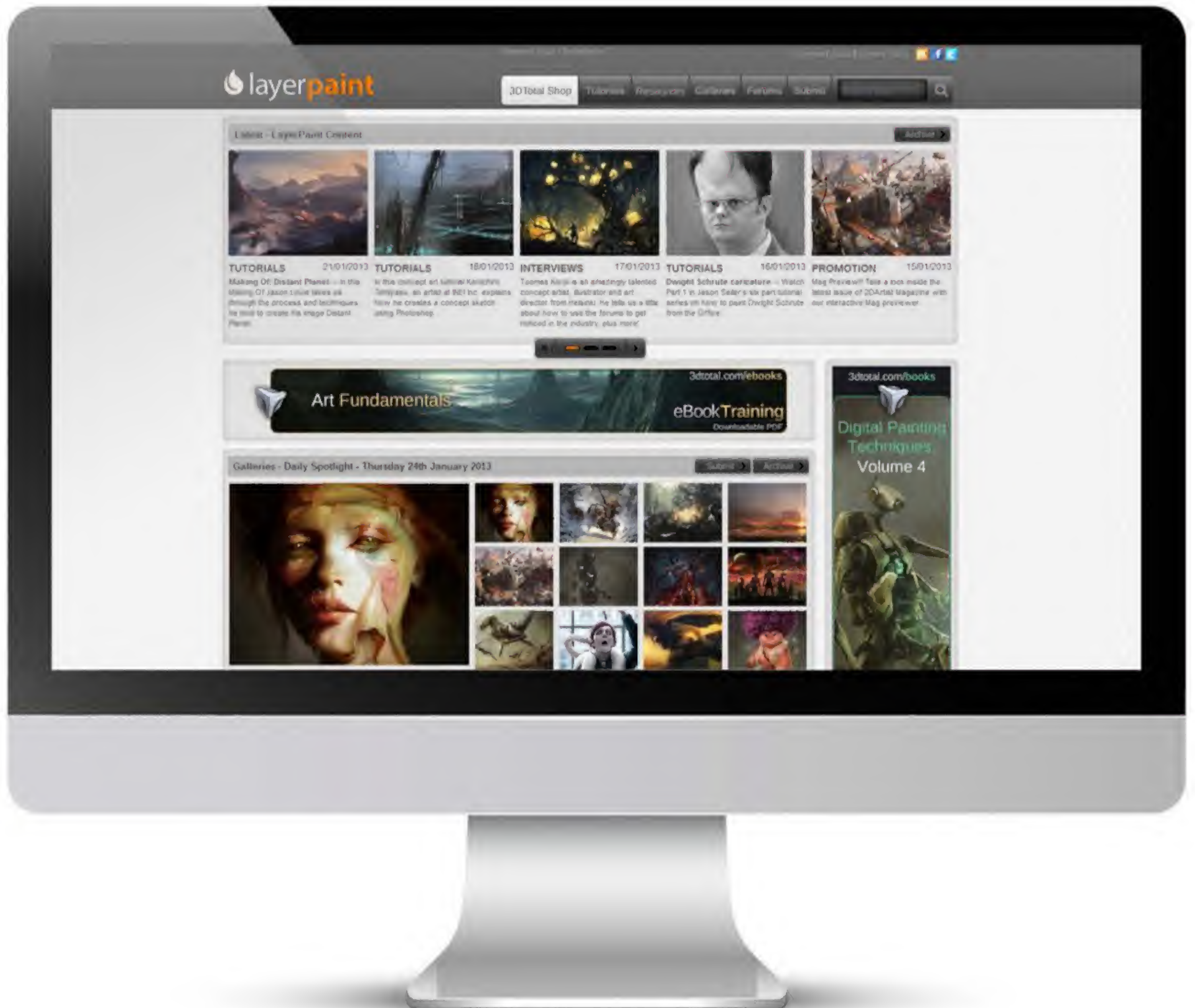
The Artist



Mark Hammermeister

markdraws.com





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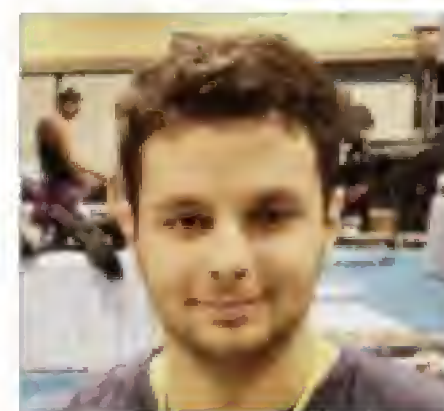


Master atmospheric lighting effects

In this comprehensive tutorial, Darek Zabrocki explains his methods for creating credible mood and lighting conditions in a realistic medieval scene. Using a grayscale base, Darek uses color, light, composition and various atmospheric effects to make his medieval masterpiece [▶](#)



The Artist



Darek Zabrocki

darekzabrocki.com

Software Used:

Photoshop

Darek Zabrocki is a freelance concept artist and illustrator living in Gdansk, Poland. He began painting as a hobby, then switched to digital art, and since 2010 has been doing it professionally. He has worked for clients such as 20th Century Fox, Fantasy Flight Games and Radical Publishing.

Learn to use light and shadow to create an atmospheric and realistic medieval scene...

In this tutorial I will go through the process of creating a moody and realistic medieval scene based on a grayscale thumbnail. The idea behind this painting is to convey a realistic scene set in the middle ages. I want to avoid a very cliché setting with one knight and a castle in the background, but will use that as a starting point to develop my own ideas. I decide to make the knights' division set off from the castle to imply a reconnaissance before the war.

The main technical focus of this image will be the mood and climate built by playing with light and shadow, atmospheric effects, color palette and a more complex composition. I will also briefly explain how to paint convincing and realistic horses. Understanding of their structure and body work will be essential to create them in the right way.

01 In search of a good thumbnail: This first stage will usually determine how good the picture will be. Basically, if you have a good thumbnail, you will probably get a good picture from it. To create thumbnails, I always start with bigger brushstrokes, creating the shapes for the objects I want, and then I cut it off or add another one.

It is good to keep all the planes separated on layers from the beginning. I always make one layer for the background (the sky), then another one, for example, for the mountains, then another for the castle. If you want to extend one of these, just group it (Ctrl+G) and name your groups in the right order, e.g. for the background layers, you could group the sky, clouds and fog.

02 Improving the initial idea: At the beginning, I decide to stay with the first idea sketch, even though it's very cliché. I want to focus on diversifying the planes at first, yet still think about working on the character's position. These can be established in advance, but I'm not afraid of changing the pose later on. I prepared three different sketches in the first step so can always take an element from them if needed.

I am sure about the background at this stage though, so I start building more refined shapes for the castle and elements of the landscape.

03 Transition to color: Moving to color can be a very difficult and tricky stage. If you want to start with grayscale and then switch



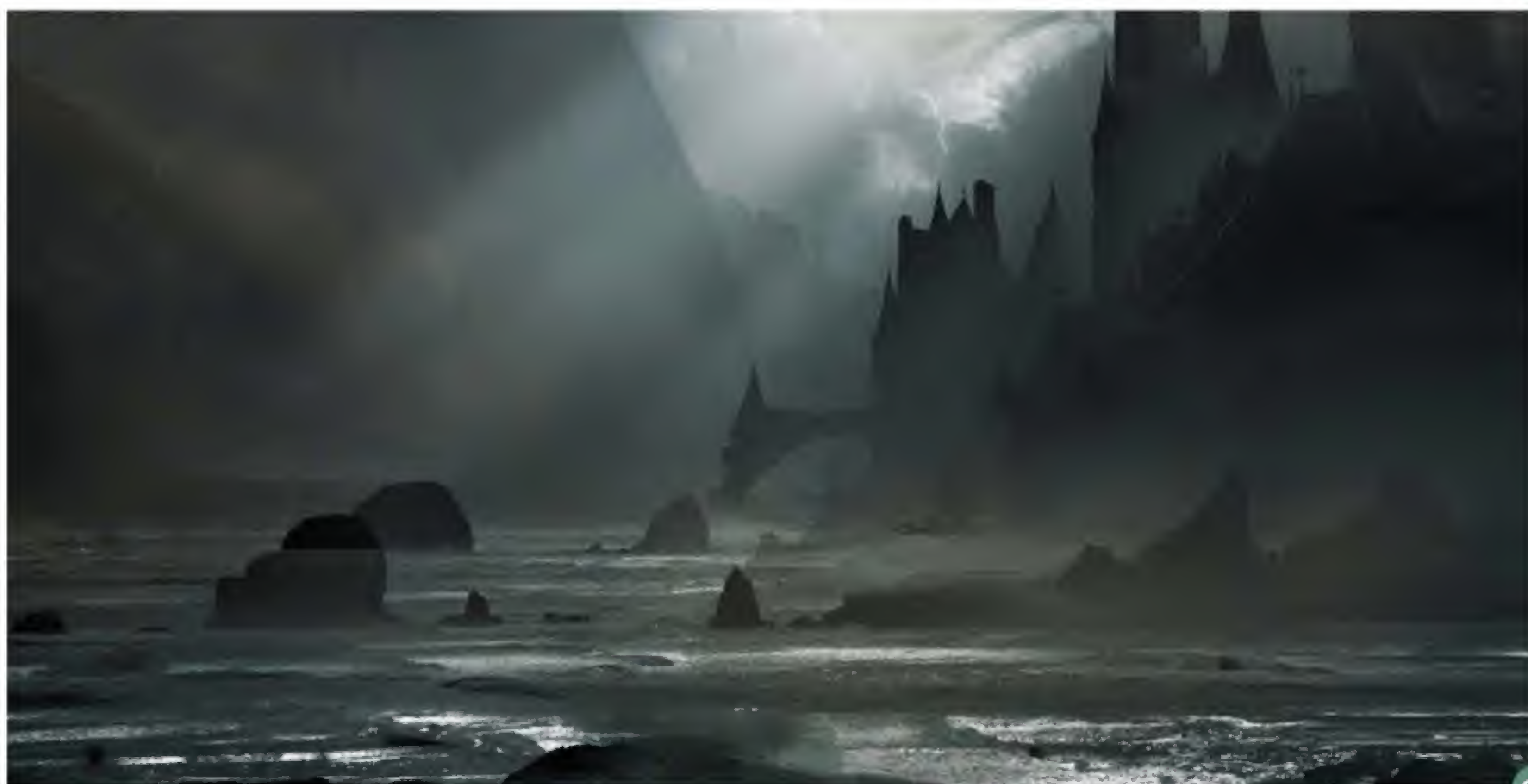
01

into color, I recommend that you keep the value gradation as clean and as visible as you can. If you have well-set values from the beginning, you can simply create new layers (Ctrl+Shift+N) and change the layer mode to Color. Now you can put some subtle strokes of local colors on objects you want to colorize.

Sometimes it's a good idea to make some quick color concepts for objects like the armor, clothes and so on. First, I put some slight colors on the sky and environment to mix them and fit them into the all-important lighting scheme that determines everything in the scene. ►



02



03

- 01 Exploring potential thumbnails for this scene
- 02 Adding detail to the background of the scene
- 03 Adding subtle color hints to the background scene

⚡ PRO TIP

Painterly look and movie grain

I use my own brush pack that I created to achieve a painterly look in my pictures, and also use some effects (besides Unsharp) after I merged all the layers – noise, for example. You can find this in Filter > Noise > Add noise and then uncheck the Monochromatic window. Keep the Noise effect on Uniform and, depending on the picture size, you can calculate the percentage amount for the grain effect.

You can also create a new layer on top of all the layers, fill it with gray color, and set the layer mode to Color Dodge with the Opacity setting on 50%. It is much sharper, but also works well to create a grain effect.



04



05

04 Improving and mixing ideas: I am still at the stage where I can change the character's position and pose. I want to leave the background as it is now and add more characters, as I did on one of the first thumbnails. This can enrich and improve my composition, giving it more originality and a dynamic quality.

05 Texturing and detailing: I like the idea of implementing characters from the third thumbnail into the scene. I turn off

the group of layers with characters on and start polishing the background. I like to graduate my work from objects furthest away from the viewer towards the ones that are the closest.

I put some textures of rocks and mountains on the mountain shapes.

If you have the shapes on separate layers as I mentioned earlier, you can block the layer (press / on the keyboard) and then make a Clipping mask

with the texture on it (press Alt on the layer you want to clip into the shape layer on the Layers window). Now all the textures are assigned to the mountain's shape layer. You can always unlock the 'mother' layer for this set and cut off or add new shapes too. The texture layer signed into that 'mother' layer will also be cut or added in here.

If you want to duplicate some parts of a texture, the Clone stamp tool (press S) is a great tool that also allows you to vary and blend textures in

“I decide to put one of the knights more into the foreground. It immediately gives the viewer a better lead into the scene, creating both depth and an immersive narrative”

different ways. You can get all the stamps from the entire document. It depends on the effect you want to create.

I place my textures on the mountains in the Screen layer mode and establish the sharpness of it by tweaking the layer's Opacity, Contrast and Brightness. Don't forget that the parts in the background should not be sharper than the ones in the foreground.

06 Light effects/paintover textures: This step is about adding light effects. I highlight the castle towers with light from the sun and give some initial dust and smoke to diversify the planes. The most important thing to remember is to keep the light consistent throughout the scene.

I then add a rough sketch of the character that I can begin refining in the next step.

07 Character poses: As I mentioned previously, I'm aware that I can still utterly change the characters' position and pose to improve my composition. I already have a division painted but as I want to add more depth, I decide to put one of the knights more into the foreground. It immediately gives the viewer a better lead into the scene, creating both depth and an immersive narrative. I decide the scene is finally completed and I can continue working on the details. ▶

04 Adding a set of characters inspired by another of the thumbnails

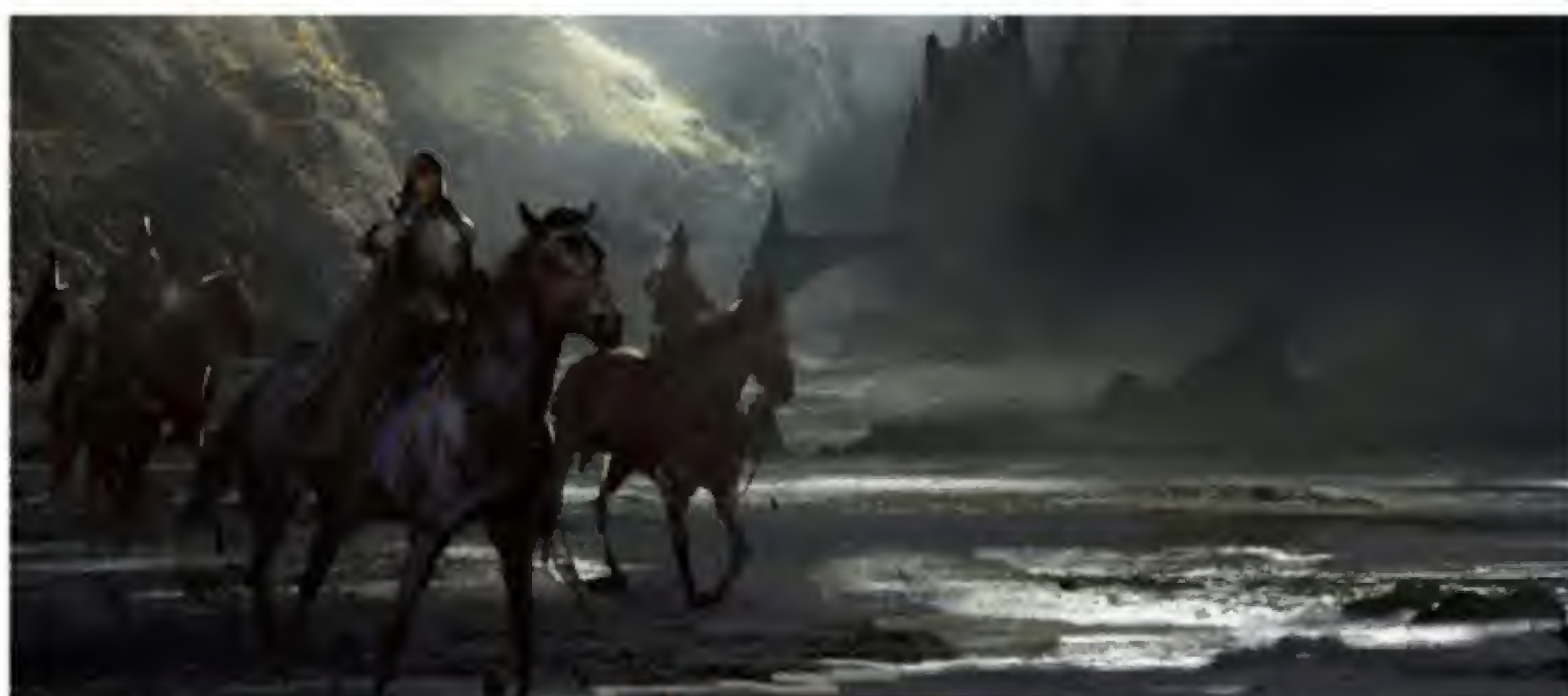
05 Adding texture detail to the mountains in the background

06 Refining the lighting the scene and roughly adding the character

07 Developing the pose and refining the lead character



06



07



08



09

08 **More improvements:** I still feel I can tweak the composition a bit more so put the division a bit closer to the camera.

09 **Checking anatomical issues:** I notice that the lead rider's torso is a bit too low and wide so I pulled it up. It's good to do anatomical checks because sometimes if you spend a long time on one painting, you are not able to find every little mistake. If you stare too

long at one painting you become used to it, and it becomes difficult to see any errors.

10 **Keep on detailing:** I continue polishing the picture, enriching the colors of the armor and finding an interesting design. Sometimes I draw and design elements on a separate document, and if I like it I try to implement it into the picture. For design inspiration, I recommend using photo portfolio

sites like www.flickr.com, where you'll find many amazing images of knight tournaments, cosplay and medieval-themed special events.

11 **More color and lighting effects:** I don't want to make all the horses the same color, so I put some variety in. I place the third rider (the one with the banner) on a white horse. It gives me a lot of fun to play around with colors, though it can be tricky to put white objects in a



10

“You just have to remember that all the color variations in the scene are easier to notice on white objects, so the shadows need to reflect them, and, in this case, be a brownish hue mixed with violets and reds”

very moody, foggy and dark scene. You just have to remember that all the color variations in the scene are easier to notice on white objects, so the shadows need to reflect them, and, in this case, be a brownish hue mixed with violets and reds. All these hues depend on the surrounding environment, lighting source and density of air.

Furthermore, I decide to put a bit more light where the third rider is running. I lighten the area where the light hits the ground, and it immediately gives a nice separation between the first and second plane. It also creates more depth in the scene. ►



11

- 08** Moving the characters to create greater impact
- 09** Fixing the lead rider's torso to reflect better anatomy
- 10** Polishing the image by refining the armor and general detail
- 11** Refining the light and color around the white horse in the background



12

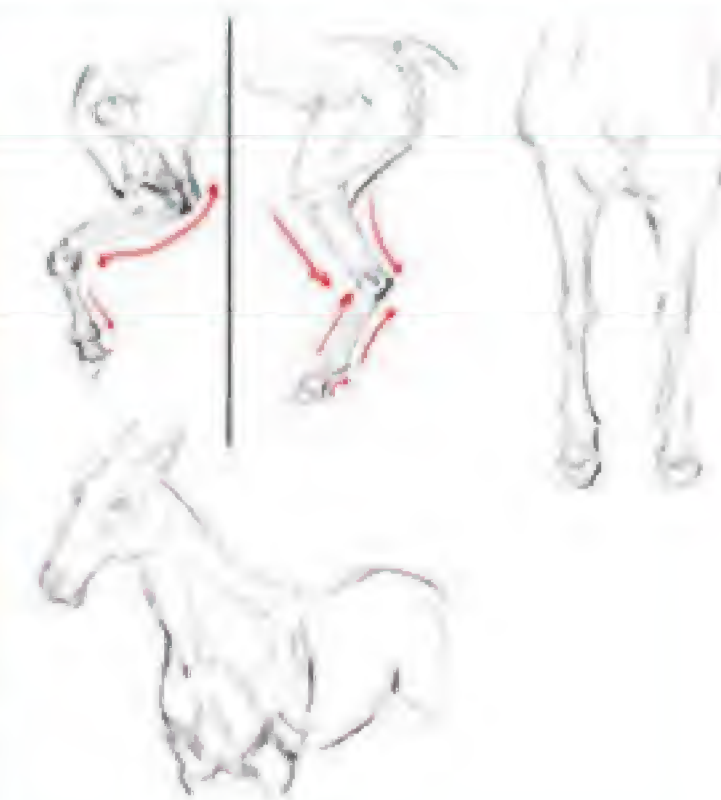
⚡ PRO TIP

Organic stuff: horses

As many artists know, painting horses can be a very tricky task. I've made a lot of different horse paintings/drawings and find it very enjoyable, so I can share some basic tips about painting these animals with you.

Though horse anatomy can be associated with many other derivative species, the most important thing to understand is how the body of a horse works. Its movements are strongly connected to the bone structure and the tendons/muscles adjacent to them. If you look how the legs of horses work while it is walking or running, you will be able to gather indispensable knowledge that will inspire more realistic silhouettes and shapes in your work.

Deeper knowledge may not be needed as much while drawing, but an understanding of position of body elements is vital and essential. You'll see here that I've created some quick sketches that describe the direction of the body and the basic shapes of legs that I think are most difficult to master while drawing horses.



- Key areas to consider when drawing horses, and the knowledge applied to sketches



“It is important not to leave anything looking too ‘sketchy’. Don’t confuse this with creating a ‘painterly look’ – if you leave some rough strokes that aren’t accurate and are messy, it will just look unfinished”

12 Consistent light: After all the lighting corrections, I have noticed that there are too many highlights in the picture. To fix this, I make a new Levels adjustment layer (Ctrl+Shift+L) and play around with the levels to subdue the highlighted parts. I also use a Curves adjustment layer to reduce highlighted areas.

If you feel some of parts are a bit too subdued now, you can always erase adjusted parts on the layer adjustment mask. Then, if you erase (E) too much, you can paint on the mask again (B) to reapply more adjustments. It’s up to you how to use the options though – there are a million ways to accomplish the same effect.

13 Detailing process: I almost have everything set; I just need some more work on the characters in the background, so I keep on detailing and polishing the silhouettes of the horses.

It is important not to leave anything looking too ‘sketchy’. Don’t confuse this with creating a ‘painterly look’ – if you leave some rough strokes that aren’t accurate and are messy, it will just look unfinished. If you are doing a lot of polishing but some parts are deliberately loose, it should look alright. The difference between this is about how much suggestion and accuracy in terms of silhouettes/shapes exists. If it’s sloppy or doesn’t tell the viewer anything you should work on it.

I’ve always tried to improve my technique at leaving some parts very loose and sketchy. At first though, it never looked good and those parts didn’t resemble anything. Until you know how to convey the exact object with simple suggestions, you will not be able to make some parts loose.

14 Final stage: After I have all the characters set and all the details are done, I can check if everything is consistent. I add very slight changes to the shadows using Color Balance to build up the colors, and use Hue/Saturation to control the most saturated parts. I also add some small details like water splashes beneath the horses’ legs and dust whirling around. I mostly use a soft brush for those kind of effects.

After all is done, I make one layer gathering all previous ones into one (Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E) and

use the Sharpen filter. To do this, go to Filters > Unsharp and then estimate the amount depending on how big the picture you want to adjust is. ●

12 Creating the right atmosphere by subduing the highlights

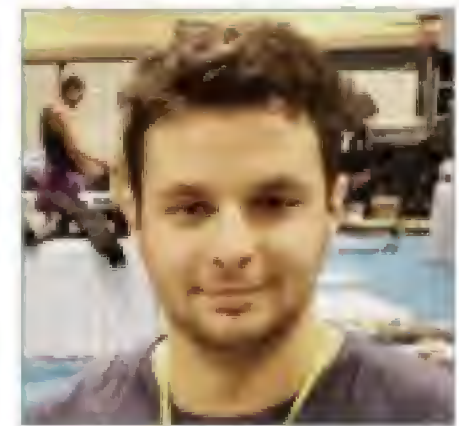
13 Work on refining the details using a painterly effect

14 Adding small final details and sharpening the image. Now it’s done!

13



The Artist



Darek Zabrocki
darekzabrocki.com



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Kamil Murzyn shares tips and
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The Artist



Kamil Murzyn

kamilmurzynarts.pl


Software Used:

Photoshop

Kamil Murzyn is a 3D generalist from Poland working for mobile gaming. In his spare time, he likes to draw, paint and sculpt creature concepts and character designs.



Create creature concepts

Kamil Murzyn walks us through his process for creating and digitally painting his cool creature concept *Avicularius* 



Discover techniques to create creature concepts, from a sketch to the final piece...

Avicularius was actually a personal study for painting a more polished and detailed render of my creatures than ever before. It took me about one-and-a-half days to finish.

01 Concept: I started with no idea of the final outcome. I just sketched random animals during this phase as I thought about what that creature could be. The idea of a bird keeper (*Avicularius* in Latin) appeared.

I didn't spend much time on the design, as I wanted to focus more on painting in this exercise. I did a couple of simple sketches and re-drew the head a few times as I wanted it to look friendlier.



“People tend to use all the values, from 0 to 1, when painting their pictures, but after putting down color layers, they tend to turn out very pale because color saturation gets lower with higher values”

02 Basic grayscale: I decided to switch my workflow a little bit, and started with a grayscale painting to allow me to focus on the values. In my usually workflow, I don't spend much time on values before switching to colors, and then doing the final painting. This time I wanted to create the final values early on.

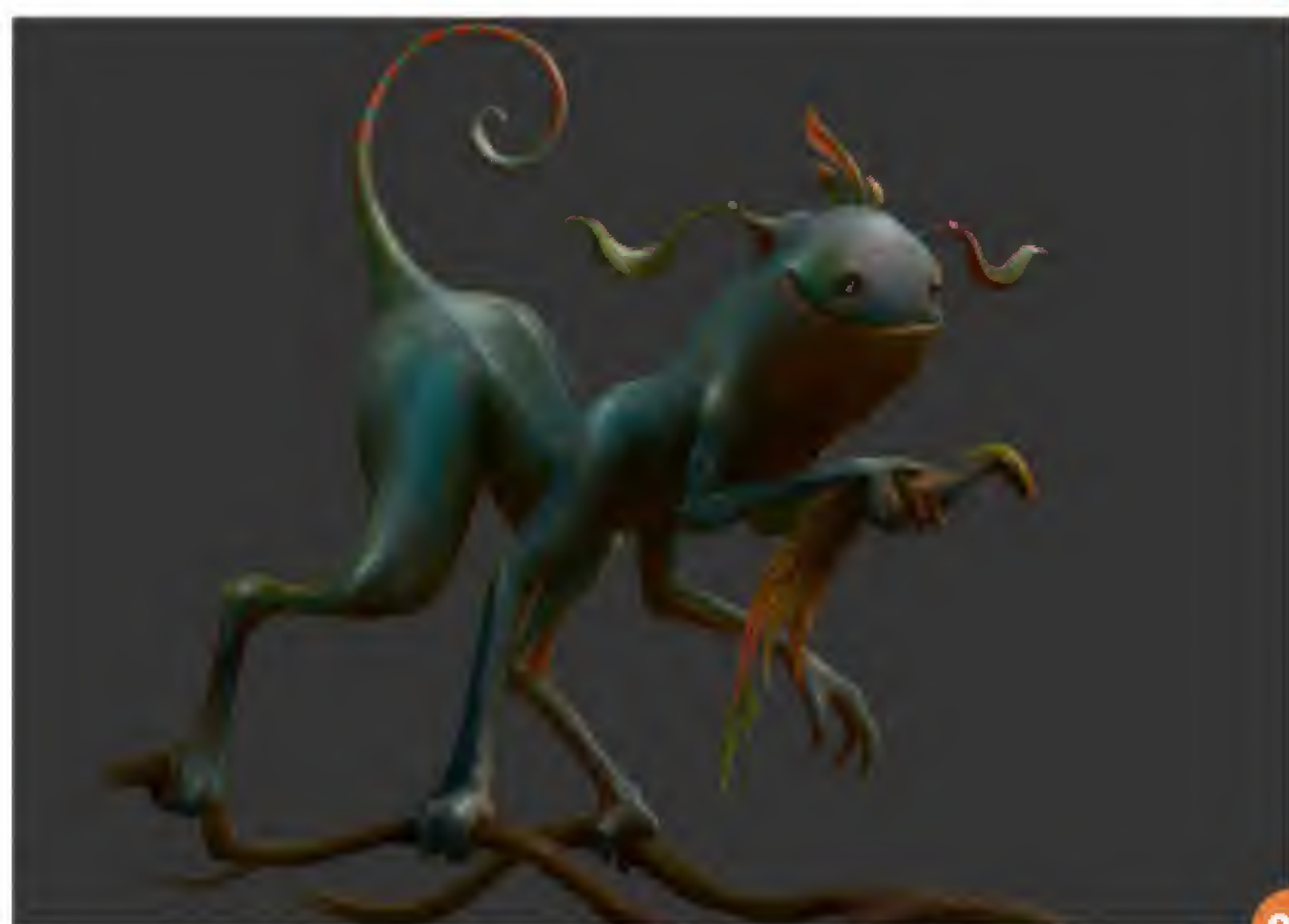
03 Finishing grayscale: I have learned to keep my values very dark – 80-percent of them are in the bottom 25-percent of the grayscale. People tend to use all the values, from 0 to 1, when painting their pictures, but after putting down color layers, they tend to turn out very pale because the color saturation gets lower with higher values.



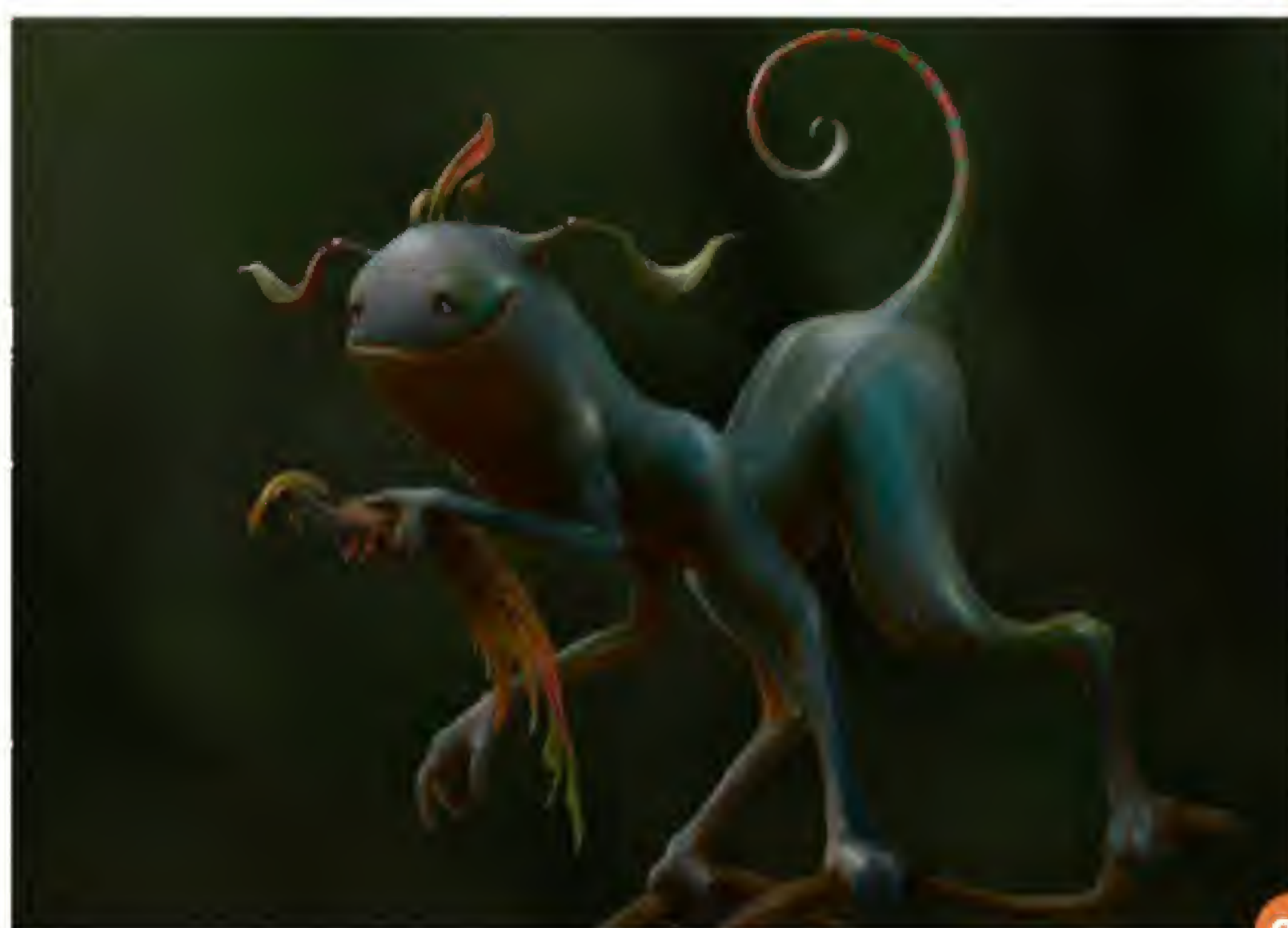
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“Dust in the air is always a nice addition and creates a fairytale mood”

I prefer to keep my whites for specular highlights and rim lighting.

In this one I wanted to really pay attention to the surface quality. I painted the diffuse light first and specular highlights at the end. Soft specular, together with sharp, white spots, created a realistic illusion of thin reptile skin. For the whole process, I used a simple soft brush, and only changed the hardness on occasion.

04 Colors: In this step I put a simple Color layer above my grayscale creature and started experimenting with colors. I decided to go for really exotic and saturated colors. I used the Sponge tool to saturate shadowed parts even more, for an organic SSS look.

05 Background: To create the background, I simply blurred a photo and tweaked the color levels – I kept it very simple because it was not the main subject of my study. I tweaked the values to fit the creature and did some correction with a large soft brush to be sure nothing distracted the silhouette of my animal.

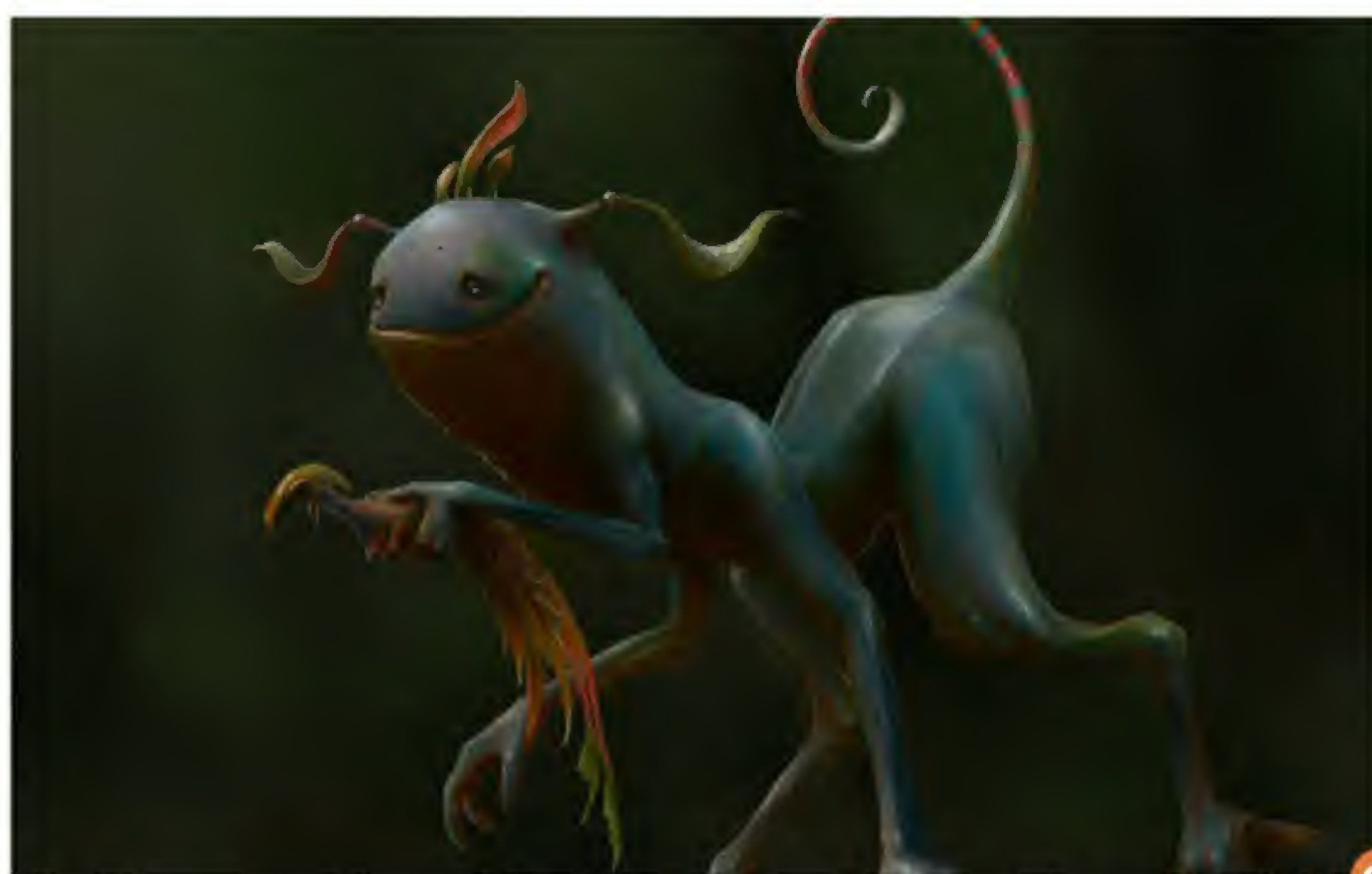
06 Lighting the background: Finally, I applied a Noise filter to the background. I then created a couple of adjustment layers to correct the overall contrast. I thought the current image was too dark at that point and wanted it to be more cheerful.

07 Adding atmosphere: To blend the creature better with the environment and create more depth, I ended up painting a little fog and atmosphere.

Dust in the air is always a nice addition and creates a fairytale mood.

08 Finishing: I used a couple of filters for the finishing touches. First of all, Sharpen helps bring some contrast. I then quickly painted my own Depth Pass which I used with a Lens Blur filter to add focal depth to my creature. Finally, I used the Lens Correction tool to mimic photographic effects like noise, distortion, chromatic aberration and vignetting.

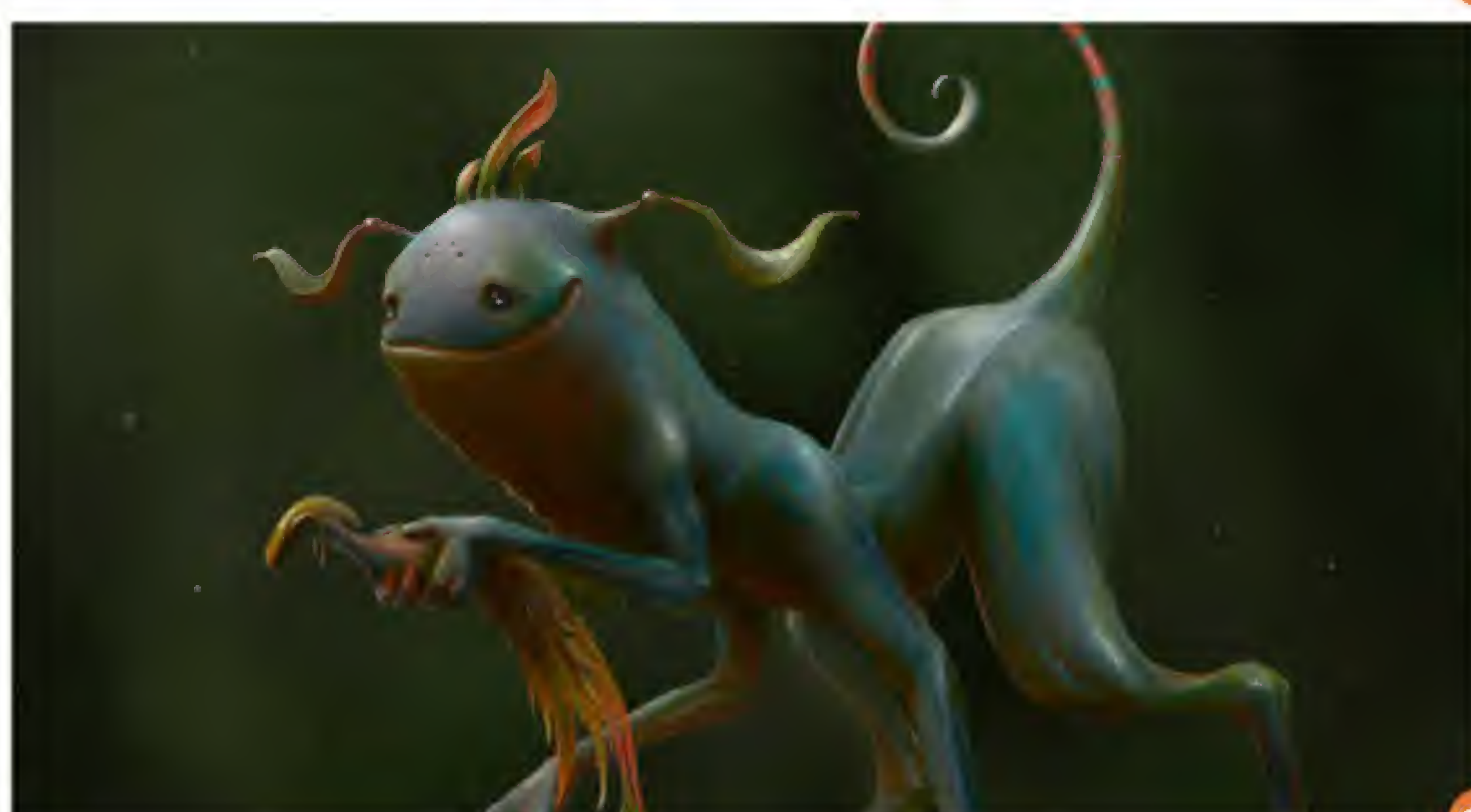
And that was it – the last thing to do was check the Latin dictionary! ●



06



07



08

01 The initial design sketch

02 Starting off by establishing the values in grayscale

03 Working on the values in grayscale

04 Adding in vibrant colors

05 Adding in a blurred background

06 Lightening background areas

07 Lightening the background further and adding in particle elements

08 Finishing up with a few filters



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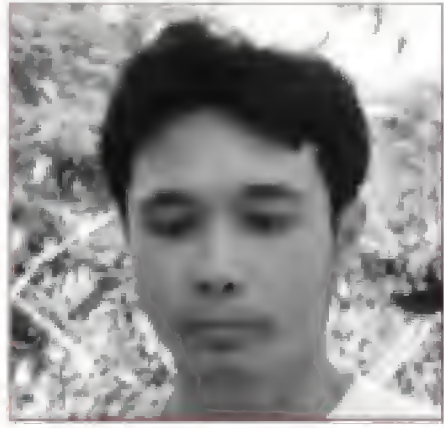


Khalid Al-Muharraqi is an artist in every sense of the word—it runs in his family. Khalid and his father Abdulla Al-Muharraqi were recently honored with a father and son art exhibit in Bahrain, opened by His Royal Highness, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain. LightWave 3D is essential software for Khalid's craft—transforming ideas into art that is revered worldwide.

"LightWave 3D is the tool that helps me create the images in my head. I use a variety of 3D applications, but LightWave 3D is always the backbone of my work. It has tools that make sense to me and allow me to reach my artistic goals." – Khalid Al-Muharraqi

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The Artist



Aekkarat Sumutchaya

webang111.deviantart.com

Software Used:

Photoshop

Aekkarat Sumutchaya is currently working as an Art Director and also a co-founder of ANIMANIA, an animation studio located in Bangkok, Thailand. Aekkarat is inspired by his lifestyle, experimenting and by the environment. He then layers these ideas with stories, personal opinions, and wild imagination.

Design narrative compositions

Aekkarat Sumutchaya talks us through the process he used to create his image *Light Up Flowers*. He shares invaluable tips and techniques on using value, color and implied lines to create a main focal point and story in your composition ▶





Discover how to create rhythm, flow and focal points within your compositions...

The young girl is astonished by a field of glowing flowers at sunset and reaches out towards the one-eyed monster. The cyclops has ears that look just like peacock feathers and in his hands, he holds a glowing translucent pink flower that is known to be the rarest flower in the kingdom. This particular flower only glows around a pure one's heart.

Relaxing in the back, the ten-eyed giant monster observes his surroundings without turning his head. He has enormous earlobes and his sense of hearing is as keen as his vision is sharp.

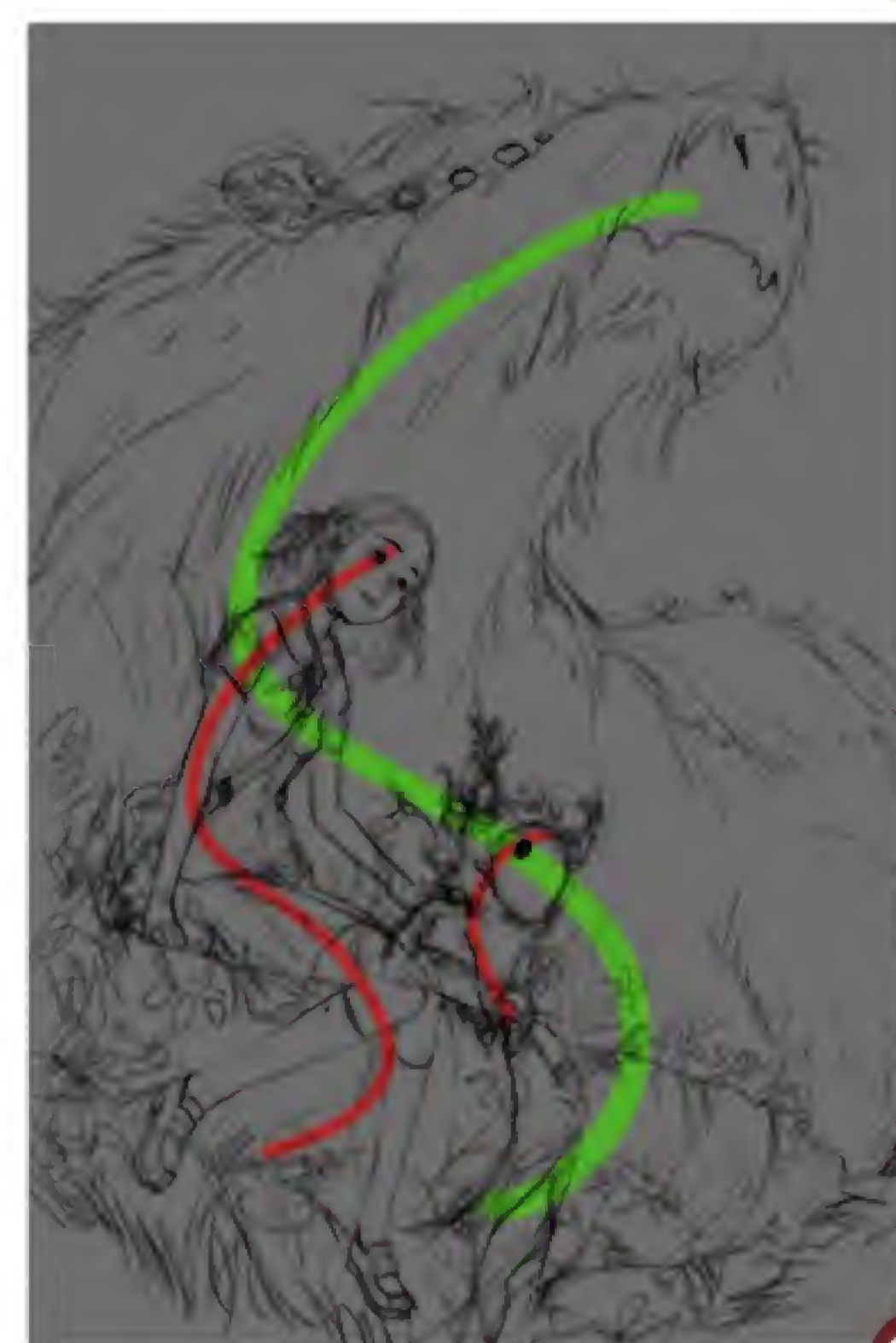
The young girl is amazed by the glowing flowers without realizing that the most magical flower is in the monster's hands. The flowers continue to glow and will spread to the entire area in any moment. This magical flower of companionship will light up the entire kingdom when she holds it in her hand.

01 Initial sketches: The Eurasian girl character represents the companionship

of the human race, regardless of race, color, or national origin. The one-eyed monster character has dark fur covering the entire body, and his ear shape and design is inspired by peacock feathers. The ten-eyed monster character has a long nose with dark-red tiger-stripe fur. His earlobe has the shape of a leaf. Being middle-aged (compared to human years) makes him see the world from a different perspective. Finally, the rare and unique translucent pink-petaled flower has pollen that glows with the pure state of the holder's mind.

02 Composition and focal point: I want this image to communicate something grand and elegant so I decide to go with a low angle. I emphasize focal points through lines, implied lines, values, colors, and elements that help focus subject in up to three specific areas. These three figures reflect the human notion of emotional security and feeling safe – so if something goes wrong, there'll be number two and number three for backup. This image has one area to emphasize plus two additional focal points for variation.

I then establish the main character and draw her in a sitting position. She has a slightly-turned head and her body weight shifts to the right-hand side while her left hand reaches toward the



01 Design sketches for characters and elements

02 Creating an S-shape composition with the placement of the focal points

01

02

“The composition of the focal points creates curves that form an S-shape, and depict a plant that straightens itself up and grows toward the sun”

one-eyed monster that is looking back at her. The composition of the focal points creates curves that form an S-shape, and depict a plant that straightens itself up and grows toward the sun. I use the S-curve to control the line of action and maintain a rhythm and flow. This curve creates a strong pose, yet flexible, just like aquatic plants that sway back and forth in response to the water's current.

03 Figure and shape: I create clean and clear character shapes that have a variety of sizes (small, medium and large), with different color values. Consider balance and unity in the overall composition by applying different tones and color values.

04 Adding color: Create a coloring area with the Layer Mask to control the shape. First, make freeform selections along the edge of the character with Lasso tool, then use the Magic Wand tool to select the outside edge.

To expand an active selection, choose Select > Modify > Expand. In the Expand Selection dialog box that appears, enter a value of 6 pixels to determine the amount of expansion. To invert an active selection you need to choose Select > Inverse. This action selects the exact opposite of the current selection.

Then fill in the color by pressing Cmd+Del or Ctrl+Del on your keyboard.

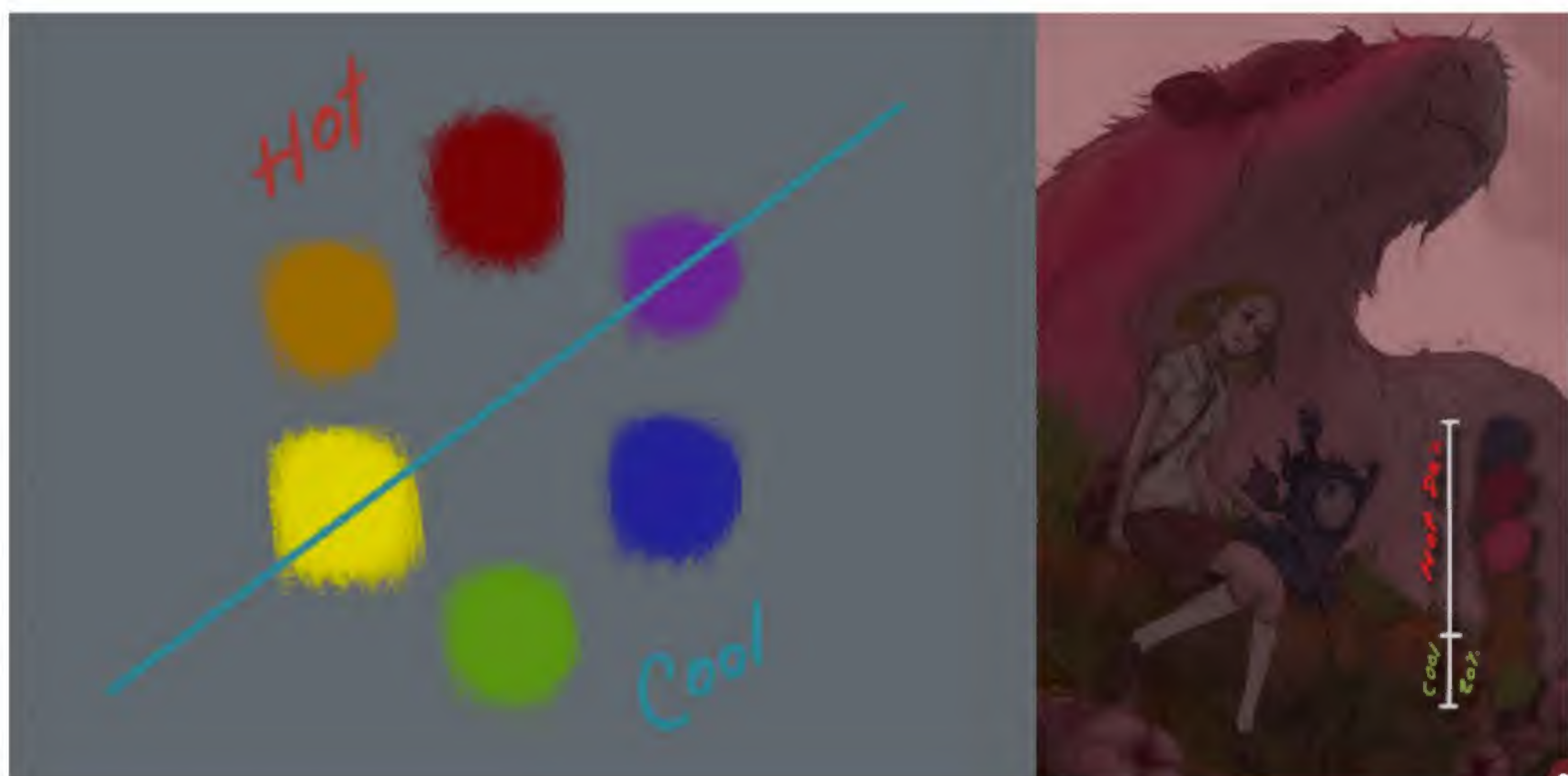
05 Color temperature: The temperature of a color is associated with physiological feelings, for example, red denotes danger and green feels safe. I consider the color temperature of my scene according to the overall concept. In general, the perception is that cool color temperature is associated with a calming and



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soothing atmosphere but can also express sadness, while warm color temperatures associate with love, passion, desire, anger, danger, excitement, strength or energy. I choose a warm color temperature for 80% of this image and the other 20% are complementary colors to experiment with variation.

06 Layering details: Start first with a larger brush, and work towards finer detail using a smaller brush. Think about how the light would reflect and how the shadows would be on a real object. Define the contours and highlight it to make the shape stand out.

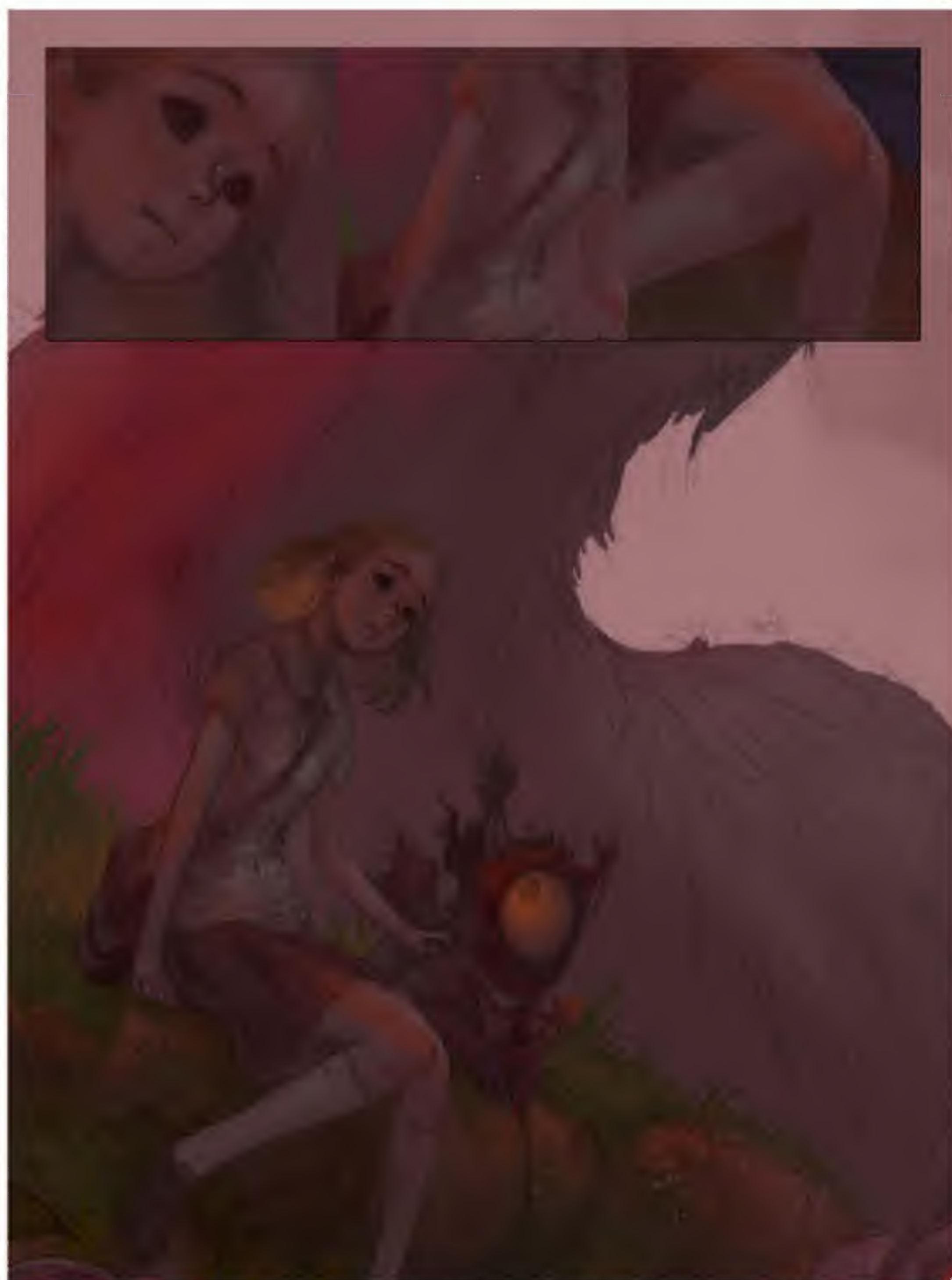
07 Environment and time of day: Establishing the right time of day is a valuable step in the process. In an early morning scene, that magical time of the day when the world is waking up gives out a calm and soothing atmosphere. Mid-afternoon creates a bright light which causes strong and dark shadows. Evening sunset is when the colors get warm, add drama to the subject and bring life to the scene. Evening mist or haze gives a wonderful mood and atmospheric feel to the scene as the light streaks are clearly visible and cascade each layer to create a greater depth of field. ►

03 Adding tone and value to the shapes

04 Making color selections based on traditional temperature values

05 Establishing color temperatures

06 Starting to add in details and define the contours



06

08 Highlight important elements: Set up the basic lighting to establish the focal point. The soft lighting casts very few shadows and makes everything seem bright and happy, while high intensity lighting creates a feeling of high drama, and an intensity of mood of either deep love or deep terror.

I establish a dreamy atmosphere with dramatic lighting and incorporate surrounding elements such as a flock of birds and a leaf carried away by the wind.

09 Adjust final lighting: I use Filter Curves and Exposure Curves to adjust the overall lighting in the scene, and set an orange tone. I fix the gloomy sky and the light that is cast onto the character with Exposure to achieve a more vibrant-looking result.

10 More filter effects: I use Filter Effect to enhance the brushstrokes, and use the Filter Lens collection to simulate distortions caused by the camera lens.

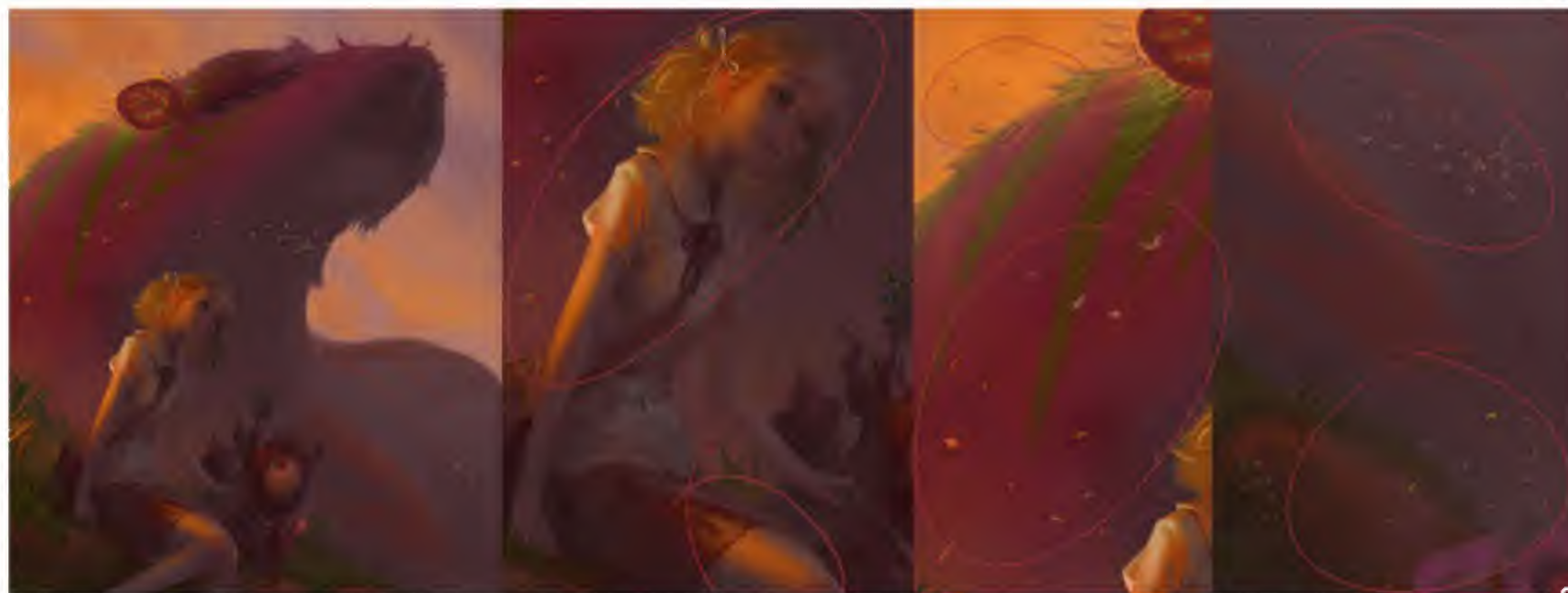
11 Final image: *Light Up Flower* demonstrates soft evening lighting in an S-curve composition which helps maintain rhythm and flow while still emphasizing the focal points of three specific areas.

I tend to foresee the final artwork before I get started, but there comes a time when that initial thought goes off course, and it's okay to play around with different ideas to see where it takes you. Get that first idea back on track because that initial idea is the power of inspiration.

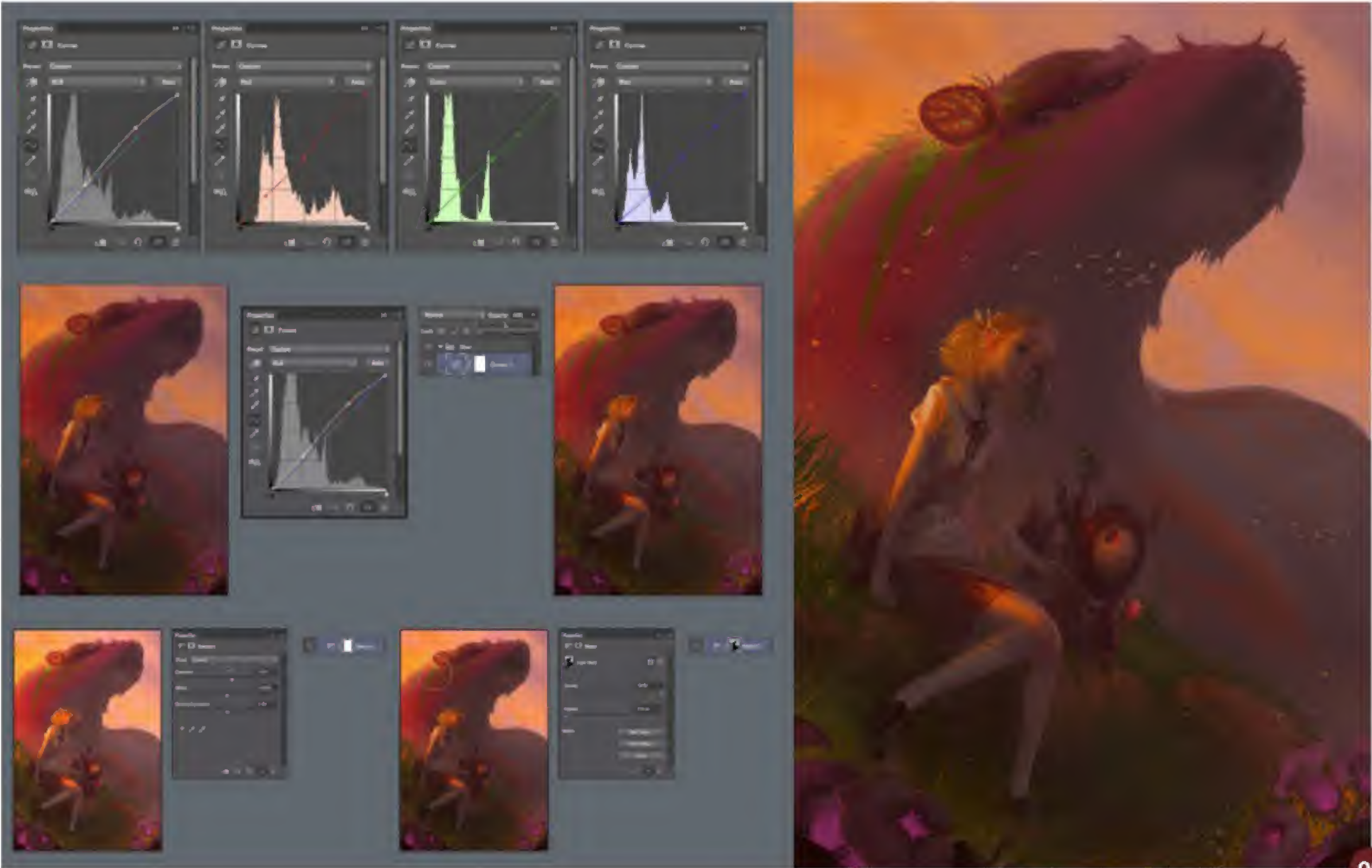
I hope this tutorial will inspire you to create amazing art work! ●



07

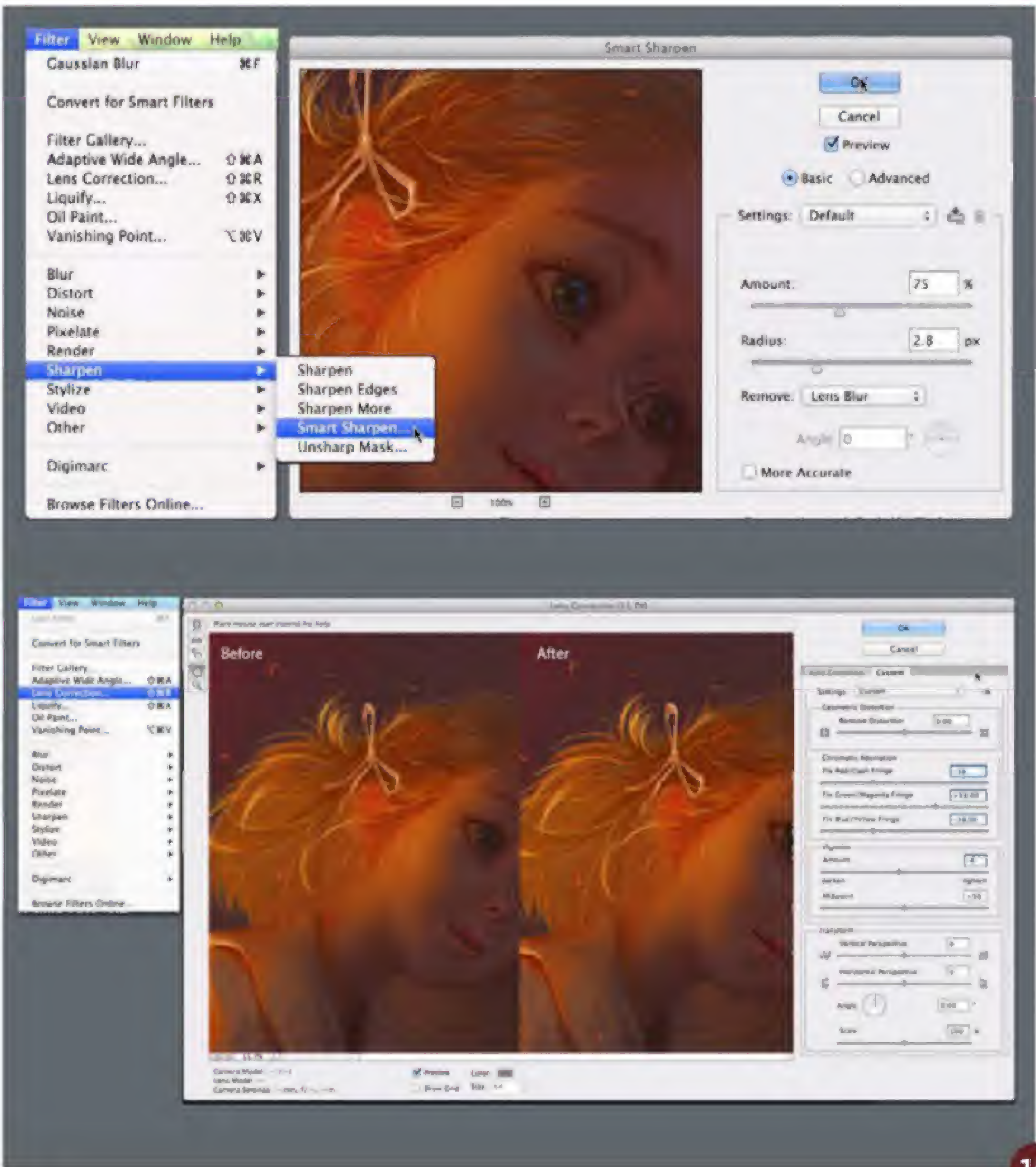


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- 07 Establishing lighting schemes in the scene
- 08 Adding in atmospheric details such as flying leaves and birds
- 09 Adjusting the Curves and the result of using the Filter and Exposure Curves
- 10 Using a Sharpen Filter to enhance the brushstrokes



10

The Artist



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ZBrush Character Sculpting^{V1}

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The Artist



Bastien Lecouffe Deharme

www.roman-noir.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Bio:

Bastien Lecouffe Deharme is an Illustrator and Digital Painting instructor. He has worked for clients and publications such as *Spectrum*, *Applibot* (*Legend of the Cryptids*) and *Mad Movies*.

DIGITAL ART MASTER:

Music Box

by Bastien Lecouffe Deharme

Discover the process behind an illustrative masterpiece with a look inside the pages of *Digital Art Masters: Volume 8*. Learn how Bastien brought his image to life using narrative, composition, symbolism, mood, references and materials. ▶



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Creative Process

The picture *Music Box* is a personal piece, illustrating a short story taking place in the universe of my graphic novel, *Retrocity*. For this work, rather than focusing on specific digital painting techniques, I decided to concentrate on the aspects I feel are essential when it comes to creating a good illustration and bringing an image to life: narrative, composition, symbolism, mood, references and materials.

Storytelling

The term illustration is commonly defined as a picture meant to tell a story. The story behind the image is like the foundation of a house – providing a base to be built upon. Without stories and meanings behind the graphic language, even the best technical skills can only achieve a beautiful but lifeless image.

Music Box describes the awakening of a young woman after a ‘total’ surgery conducted secretly in an abandoned building in the city’s darkest neighborhood. This surgery alters the subject, leaving little of her human self.

The scene depicts the moment the surgeon uses powerful lights that mimic sunlight and a music box to wake her after the procedure. These stimuli are designed to connect her with what is left of her human senses. If the awakening is a success, her humanity will be returned. If it is not, she will remain an empty carcass.

“I always make sure the references I use are relevant and serve to increase the meaning of the story”

Sketching and composition

After the initial brainstorming, I start to sketch. I begin with a series of rapid thumbnails to determine a composition. Next, I will block a final sketch as a base for the final illustration. I prefer to use a digital sketch when working with values. For “*Music Box*”, I created the thumbnails and the sketches directly within Photoshop (Fig.01).

The composition is designed to create focus on the character. The strong vertical lines in the background create weight and gravity while the lamps, floor pattern, light rays and posture of the figure create perspective lines that direct the eye and establish the face and listening ear as the focus of the composition (Fig.02).

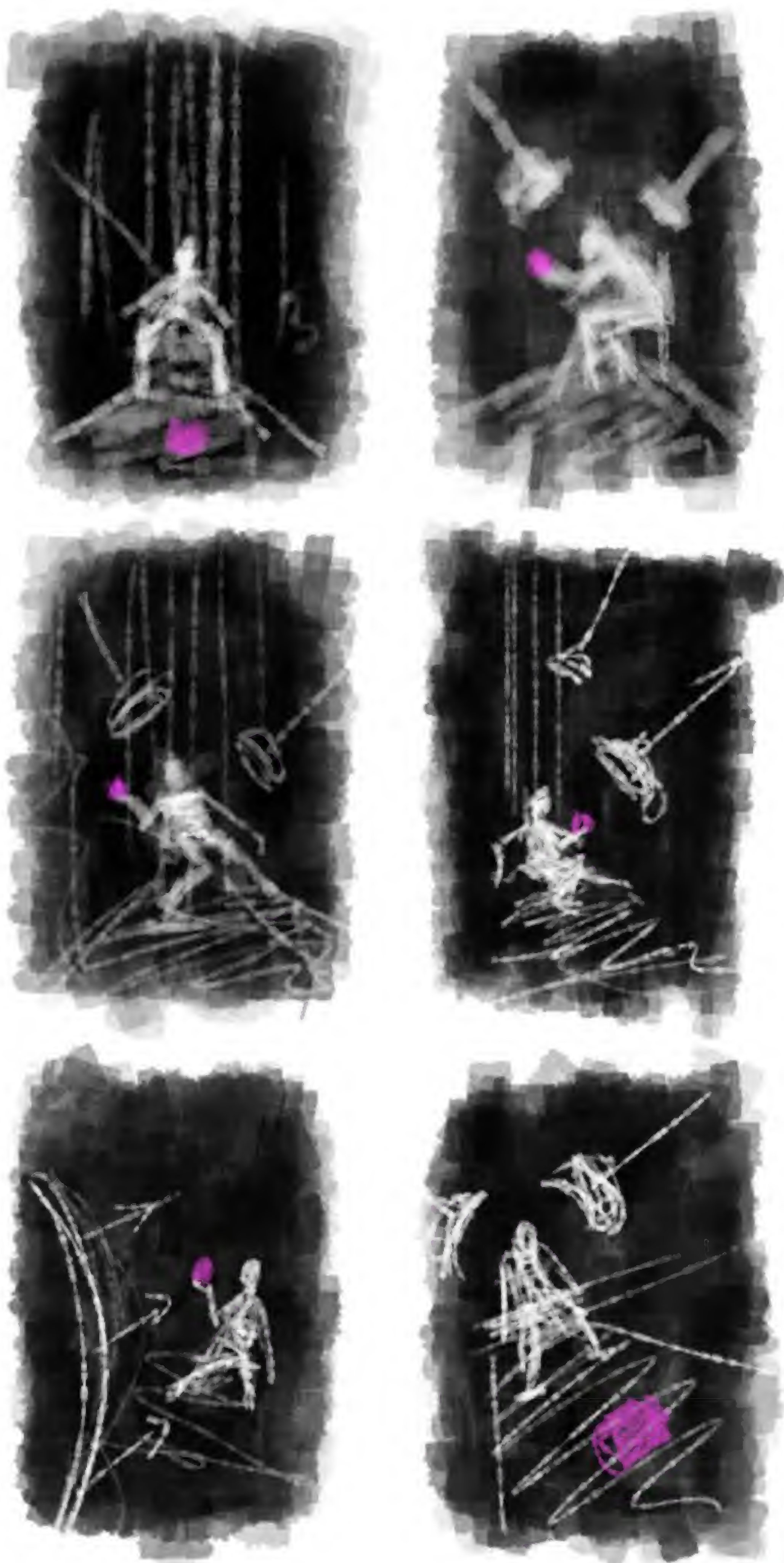
Resources and materials

The third step is about gathering materials that will creatively set the scene. When the story is

interesting, this step is usually pretty easy and fun. I will search for references all over the place, including going out into the world with my camera. One of my favorite places to hunt for inspiration is antique shops, which are always full of the strangest items, shapes, and textures. For

anatomy reference, I work with live models, and take my own reference photos.

I always make sure the references I use are relevant and serve to increase the meaning of the story within the image. With *Music Box*, I focused



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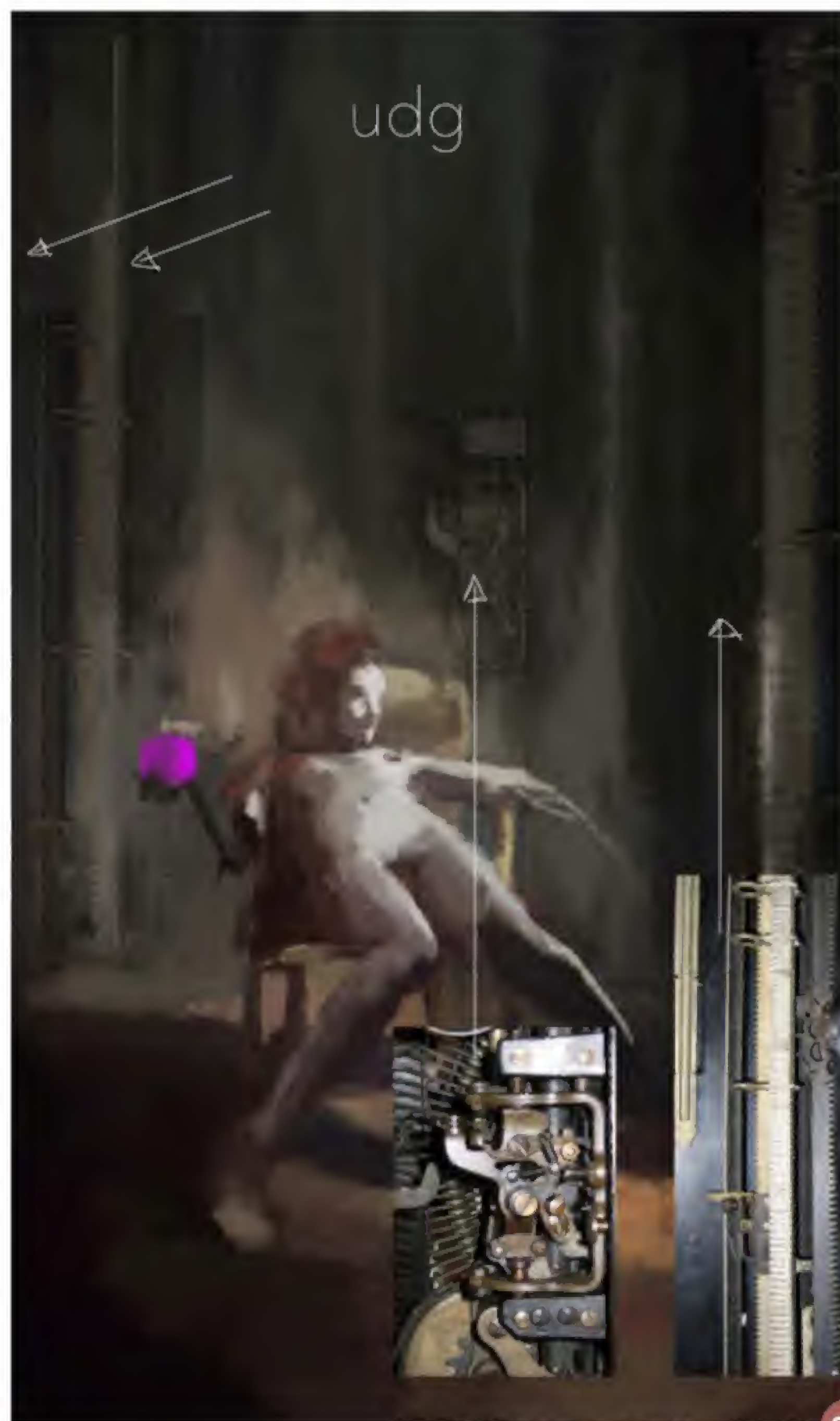
my search for resources on musical instruments and typewriter elements.

When imagining the powerful lamps that will awaken the character, I decided that the light should be contained behind very strong doors with a wheel to control the lights. With this in mind, I approached a local museum and asked to take pictures of their vault.

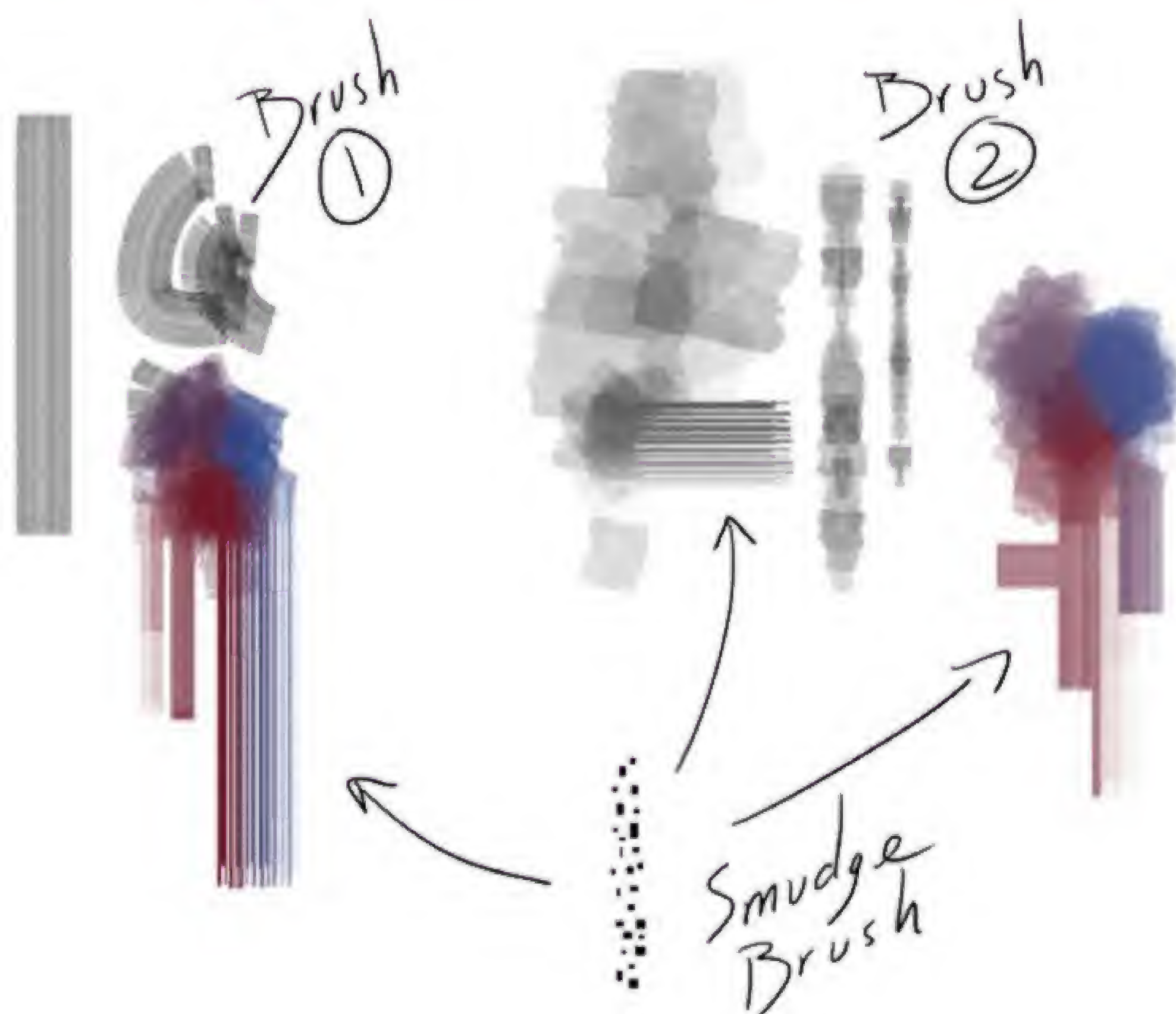
Building the picture

From the original sketch, I start the painting process. I merge the painting work with photographic or textured elements. I try to keep my workflow open allowing for any happy accidents or inspiring surprises (Fig.03 – 04).

I always merge the layers as early as possible to make sure I can't go back. It's important to make decisions and stick with them. Too many layers and history steps can present so many options that it becomes difficult to know when the image is complete.



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“I always pick the colors from a photo reference and work the rest of the picture according to this”

I use flat brushes as a painting knife, with a pencil and Smudge tool, alternating between these tools during the entire process. I find that importing elements, painting and smudging connects me to the way I used to work on canvas where I would combine drawing, collage and painting (Fig.05 - 07).

I work in the colors along with the overall workflow. As the picture evolves, I will keep modifying the colors, working on different zones, making sure that essential elements like the music box stand out. I always pick the colors from a photo reference and work the rest of the picture according to this. Working from a document helps me to keep a logical consistency during the creation process.

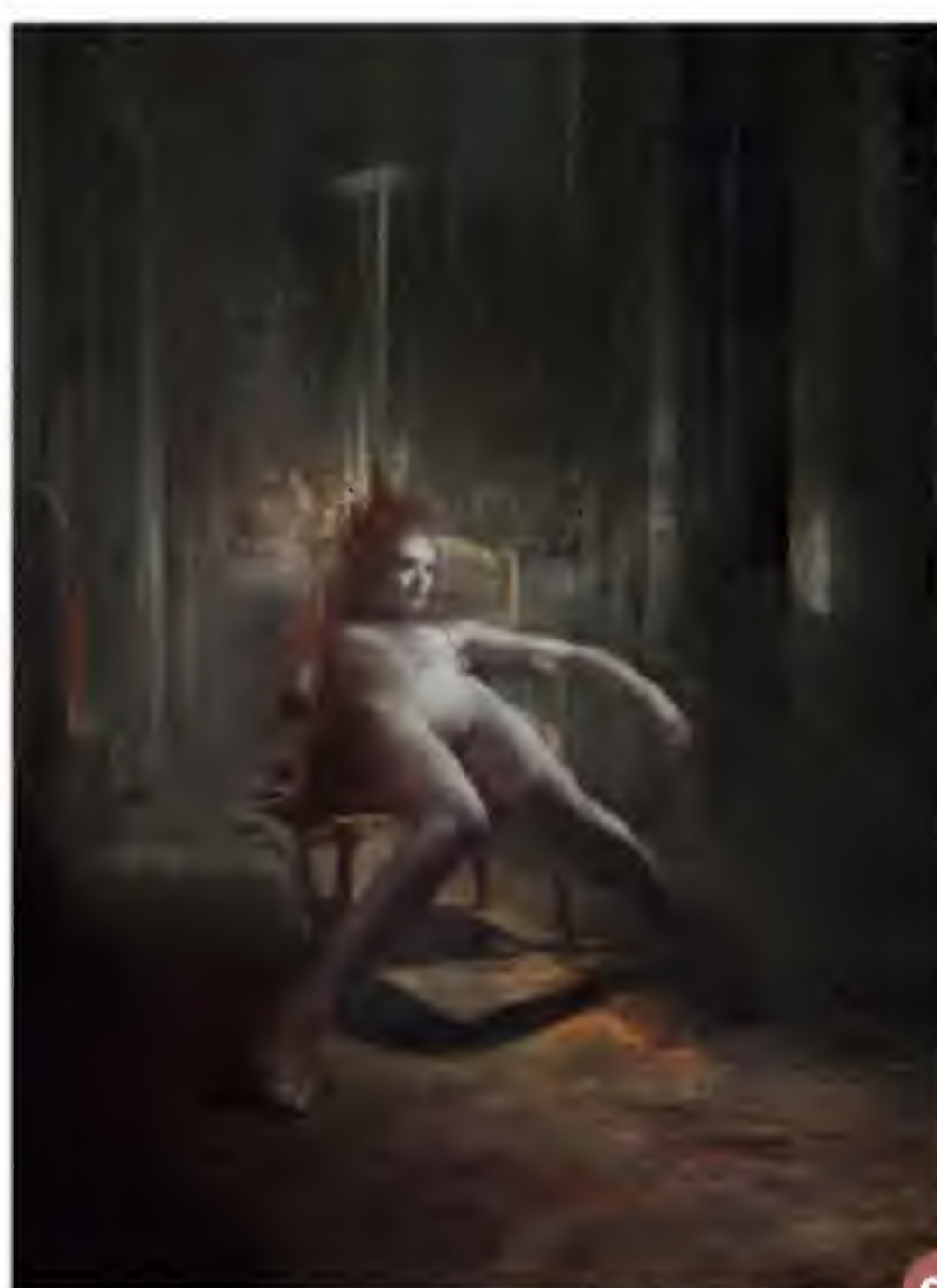
When everything is blocked and the picture is almost done, I merge all the layers and start the final step. I create a new layer in Soft Light or Overlay mode and start to add bits of light, color and detail into the picture. I play with the opacity, merge the layers, and repeat these stages over and over (Fig.08).

I often finish with overall adjustments, tweaking contrast, values and soft color gradients. To obtain the photorealistic noise that I like, I duplicate the final picture and apply the Smart Sharpen filter to that top layer. I then erase areas and keep the sharp effect only on the spots I want the eyes to focus on (Fig.09).

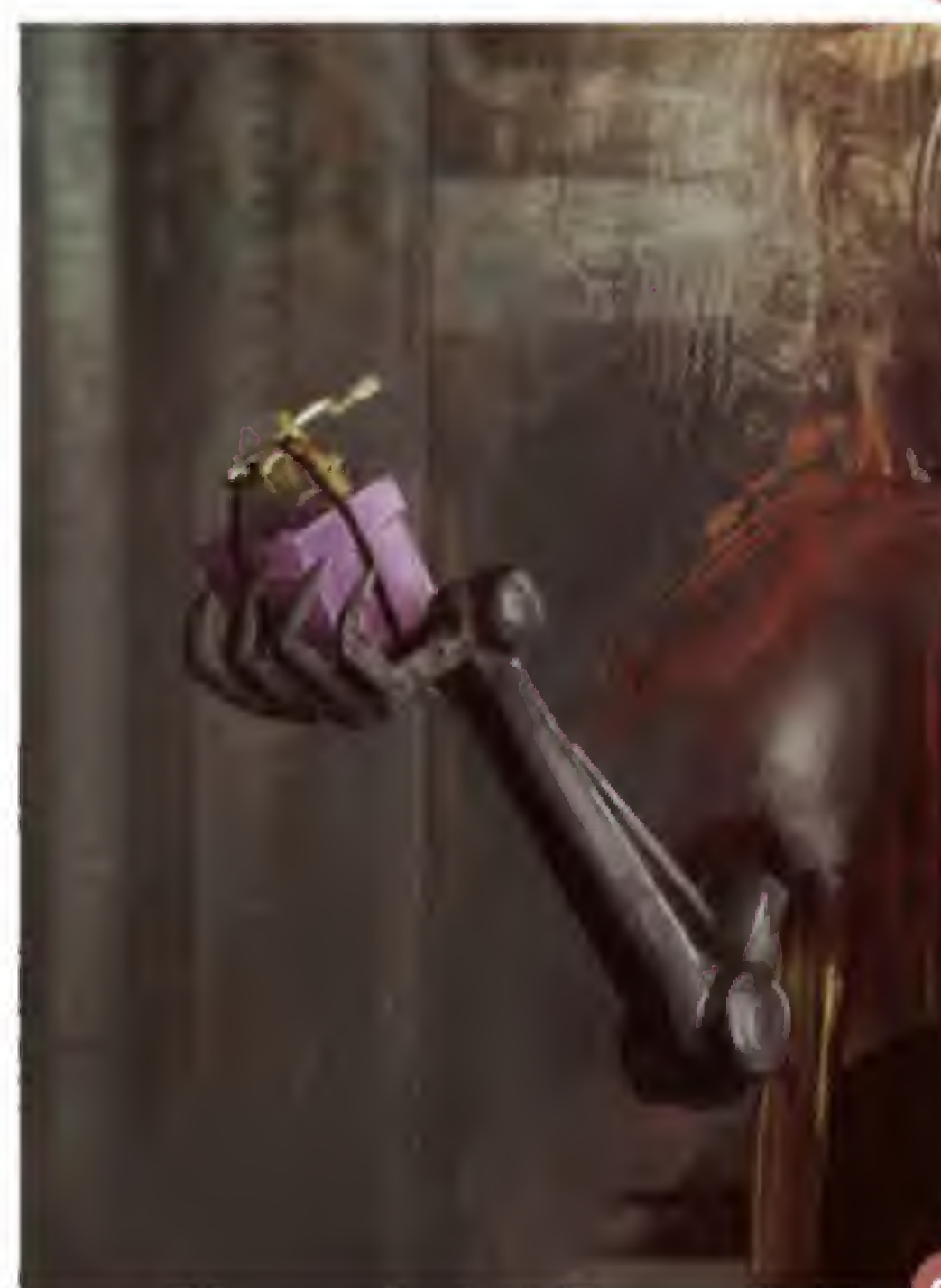
It wasn't so long ago that I was reading books looking for tips, so I am pleased to be able to share these. Time goes by fast, so work hard!



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The Artist



**Bastien Lecouffe
Deharme**

web



DIGITAL ART MASTERS

:VOLUME 8

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